



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

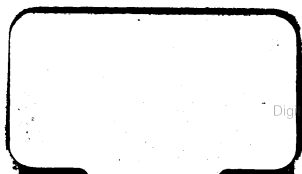
KD

43069



HN ZIFA 2

KD 43069



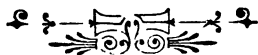
MORANS' SHILLING LIBRARY.



STRAWS IN THE WIND.

BY —

MARTIN J. MCHUGH.



ABERDEEN: MORAN & CO.

24

Straws in the Wind

BY

MARTIN J. MCHUGH

Aberdeen

Moran & Co.

1896

KJ 43069



Contents

Chapter	Page
I. STRONGER THAN HONOUR - - - - -	I
II. NO BRAINS - - - - -	18
III. A TRAIL OF FIRE - - - - -	35
IV. A PLUNGE INTO LETHE - - - - -	55
V. THE STATUE OF NIOBE - - - - -	74
VI. A PIPE OF HASHISH - - - - -	96

71

*For the favour of a review,
With the Author's compliments.*

STRAWS IN THE WIND

CHAPTER I.

STRONGER THAN HONOUR.

IT happened that night that the smoking-room of the club was almost deserted—a somewhat unusual thing. We four were its occupants. Aylworth was standing by the fireplace in a moody attitude, with his elbow resting on the mantelpiece; Hervey lay indolently stretched full length on a sofa, smoking a briar-root, his hands clasped behind his head; and Edmonds and I respectively occupied a couple of comfortable easy-chairs. The evening paper had fallen out of my hands, and, like the rest, I was idly thinking—of what I know not. From the billiard-room above sounded the muffled tramping of feet, which with the voices blurred and indistinct, and the sound of occasional laughter, alone broke the silence—if I do not count Hervey's pipe, which had an irritating trick of wheezing violently at irregular intervals.

A

"What a peculiar thing is fate!" said Aylworth suddenly. "I wonder are our individual lives governed by any tangible laws."

"I suppose they are," replied Edmonds, but slowly and dubiously.

"Well, they might as well not be, since we do not know those hidden laws," said Aylworth. "The fact that we four, who belonged to the same college of the same university, are sitting here, has just brought to my mind, *apropos* of this question of fate, that we have all in our lives proved my theory. Even our easeful friend Hervey will admit that."

"What theory, though?" asked Hervey, unclasping his hands, and sitting up on the sofa.

"Your memory is short, I fear," returned Aylworth, "but I shall refresh it. Just bring your mind back twenty years, and recall the words I said on the occasion of our last great jubilation in Brown's rooms, the night before we left the university. There were, you will recollect, twelve of you there. I was the thirteenth—the unlucky thirteenth, perhaps; for I sat apart, and was a kind of death's-head at the feast."

He paused, and gave a few long pulls at his cigar.

"I was then fresh from the Law School, you will remember. My studies had been congenial, and I had been a hard and—if I may say it—a very successful reader. Natural bias had made a moral

philosopher of me ; and a moral philosopher never adds gaiety to the festive board. Your carousing irritated me. You jibed at me for my unsociableness ; and then I turned prophet as well as moral philosopher. You were discussing your fine projects and bright prospects, and then I spoke. I told you that we were all straws in the wind in this world, practically helpless as to where the storms of life might whirl us, or its calms leave us. And then you found that you had had enough of me, and so you practically turned me out ; but before I left I told you that most of you would find in after life that my words would come true. Which of you can now disprove my prophecy ? ”

He turned and contemplated us. In his eyes was the light of a half-malicious triumph, while every line of his unusually hard and cold features was charged with the same expression.

And we sat silent, unable to combat his words. For the world had, indeed, not turned out to be the world of our youth's dreams and hopes. As I, for one, recalled those wonderful projects to which he alluded, I would have smiled, but that there was something sad in those unfulfilled dreams which checked amusement even at the thought of their extravagance. And now that we were confronted with their memory, we could not deny that we, at any rate, had suffered strange things at the hand of fate ; that none of us there had followed the path

he had marked out for himself, much less fulfilled his ambitions ; that we had indeed been straws in the wind. The twenty years that had carried us over our youth and into the maturity of life had more or less played their will with us. Perhaps it is so with all men—I think it is.

“ Well,” said Aylworth, “ you cannot disprove my words ; you know it. You, as well as I, have found that circumstances, rather than any efforts of our own, govern this life of ours.”

He paused, and turned to stir the fire. Then, drawing an arm-chair into position before it, he seated himself between Edmonds and me. The malice had died out of his eyes, and the firelight, playing on his face, accentuated every line, and made it look strangely careworn and thoughtful.

“ We know that our dreams have been unfulfilled,” he said, “ but now that we are together, I think it would be an excellent thing if we each told the tale of how this has come about. Every man has had a crisis in his life—generally in his youth—and this is the nucleus of his history. I shall tell you mine first, as I have broached the subject ; and I shall tell my tale unreservedly, as an example of what I shall expect from you.”

He paused again to hand round his cigar case, and then, leaning back in a comfortable attitude in his arm-chair, and crossing his legs, he recommenced—

"Doubtless you are more or less anxious to know how I became a literary man; and you shall, for my tale concerns that matter. The peculiar thing with me is, as you know, that, like yourselves, I had not, on leaving college, the slightest intention of following the calling in which I now find myself.

"This story of mine is a strange one, and by telling it I know that I shall lower myself in your estimation, but that, undoubtedly, is what all true life stories tend to do for the narrators. No one has ever heard this story before—hence I am somewhat esteemed by some kind friends.

"As you know, I was the senior in years in our 'set' in college—that is, Brown's set. I was almost twenty-six when I left, and I don't think that any of you had come within a year of that age at the time.

"I need only remind you that before I left the university I had just graduated in the Law School. In spite of my philosophy, I had my hopes, like the rest of you. After the long vacation, which I spent with my people in the country, I went up to London to prepare for my life's work. I entered my name at the Middle Temple, and settled down to my three years of study, preparatory to being called to the bar.

"As I have said, I had my hopes. And my ambition was indeed high. I was going to be no

ordinary barrister, with a fair education and a mere smattering of law. No, I had my own ideas about the way to achieve greatness in the legal profession. I held that the road to fame for me lay in the path of mental and moral philosophy, and that the key to all knowledge of men, and society and laws, lay in this study.

“For three years I plodded away. Following up my theory practically, I steeped myself in the philosophy of the ancient and modern schools; Roman and Feudal law, and such like technical subjects I treated with more or less disdain, and I read as little of them as I could help. Hence, when I came to be called to the bar, I was indeed more a lawyer in name than in fact.

“And now I came to face the world, and I had not alone to make my living, but to acquire fame as well. Usually a man can make a living in his profession—usually, but not always; as for making a name, he seldom does that for himself; fortune takes him by the hand and exploits him. I learned all that in time.

“I took a set of chambers in the city, and began to look out for a practice. At the outset things did not look very favourable, for the solicitors to whom I received introductions were pleased to make my acquaintance, and that was all. They would, of course, be only too happy to put a brief in my hands when they got an opportunity;

and meanwhile they would bear my name in mind. With one exception, that was how they helped me.

"Meanwhile, I frequented the law courts. I found it dull and tiresome listening by the hour to the prosy pleadings of these commonplace lawyers—who were not deep philosophers like me. Ah, how I would create a sensation when my chance occurred! But I hoped that the chance would soon come; for, truth to say, my finances were pretty low by this time. I had not calculated on having to wait any considerable time for practice after being called.

"At this time I made an acquaintance. I had never at any time been in the habit of making acquaintances; and even now I cannot imagine how I took to Jim Phelps. I met him one day in the law courts. Some barristers were chaffing him on some subject or other—I forget now what it was—and his bitter retort was so logically crushing that I congratulated him on his verbal victory. And then I spoke to him, ending by asking him to dine with me at a restaurant.

"There was a great fascination about the personality of the man; and, although he was distinctly shabby in appearance, and I was most fastidious as a rule, we became friends—friends, mind you, and not mere acquaintances. During that dinner he told me many things I did not like to hear;

for he very fully expressed his views on the poor chances a barrister without friends had of making a practice. He himself had been called some years before—he was about ten years my senior—and his struggles had ended ignominiously. He picked up his living by doing law reports whenever he could get them to do.

“‘And,’ he said to me, ‘if a man has no influence or no luck, it comes to that—or worse!’

“But I laughed and did not believe him. I looked upon the man as a cynic—an unusual kind of cynic perhaps, a clever one.

“Time went on, and things began to look unpleasant for me. My finances were dwindling with startling rapidity. And meanwhile I had to write back cheerful letters to my mother and sisters; for I had already assured them of my success, and I would prefer death to a confession of failure to them.

“And one solicitor made the variation to which I have already alluded by giving me a small brief. It was for a foolish and trivial case, and I felt a certain amount of humiliation in having to condescend to appear in it. My talents would be wasted, I knew. They were. I brought a great amount of learning to bear on the case, and the judge, after fidgeting a little over my rhetorical flights, rather summarily cut me short. I got angry and confused, and my client was nonsuited.

His solicitor, in handing me my fee, made some very unpleasant remarks which I do not care to recall.

“And I never got another brief. I had to earn money, though, and I had the humiliation to be obliged to my friend Jim Phelps for a little tutoring in the work he did ; and into that, after a while, I drifted. At first my soul revolted at it, and then I brought my philosophy to bear on the matter. I consoled myself with the reflection that my opportunity would come in time.

“But after a while I saw that something was the matter with Phelps. His philosophy was a reckless one, and his life was in accordance with it ; but that would not account for the fact that he was rapidly changing physically, that his cheek-bones were becoming prominent, and that he was getting more attenuated as the days went by, while his unpleasant cough became more and more persistent. And it was not want, for he was a clever fellow in his line of work, and made enough for his requirements.

“And then I made a supreme effort, while my clothes were sufficiently respectable, and followed one of the judges on circuit. I did not get a brief, unfortunately, but I got other work, and was away some time. When I returned I missed my quondam friend, but life's struggles soon put him out of my mind. And perhaps, after all, I was glad that he was not in his accustomed place ; for

I got some of the work that would otherwise have been his.

"And so my life dragged along; and I did not feel my position much, strange to say, for I had got beyond thinking. I still wrote cheerful letters home, full of fond lies; and I would do that as long as I could hold a pen.

"One day a porter put a dirty note in my hand when I was sitting in court. I opened it with some curiosity. It was from Jim Phelps, whom I had by now almost forgotten. It was written in a very shaky hand, from an address in Lambeth, and Jim wanted to see me, in God's name, as soon as I could go to him.

"That evening, after a cheap dinner, I made my way over to the, to me, unknown region of Lambeth. I spent more than an hour in finding my friend's address, which was in a place little better than a slum.

"Arrived at the house, in response to my knock I was admitted by an elderly woman. The dim light in the hall did not prepossess me in her favour. I asked for Mr. Phelps, and was carelessly directed to knock at the right-hand door on the second landing. I stumbled up a wretched staircase in the dark, and, coming to the second landing, groped my way to the door on the right, at which I knocked."

Our friend paused a moment, and passed his hand

a couple of times across his brow. His face had grown harder, and when he continued, he did so in a lower tone :

"I knocked, and a man opened the door. He was not my friend, but a short, thick-set man, with a clean-shaven face and cold-looking grey eyes. He was well dressed, I saw at a glance; and in one hand he held a lighted candle, while in the other he had a stethoscope and a crumpled-up pair of gloves. He was evidently a doctor.

"I told him whom I wanted to see, and he silently beckoned me into the room.

"I had never been in such a wretched room in my life, and hope I shall never again. The filthy wall paper, and the few wretched sticks which composed the furniture of the room, were a revelation of the direst poverty. My first glance took in this; my second lit upon a small bed on which lay my friend.

"I looked at him aghast. I hardly recognised him in the living skeleton I saw there before me. He caught my glance and smiled grimly.

"‘I’m glad you’ve come,’ he whispered hoarsely. ‘I want you badly—it is most important,’ and then he was seized with a violent fit of coughing, which I thought would never end.

"The doctor had put his stethoscope into his pocket, and was leaving the room. I made a quick

sign to Phelps, and followed the doctor out on the landing.

"‘This—gentleman—is my friend, whom I have not seen for a long time,’ I said. ‘I am indeed shocked to find him in such a state.’

"‘Oh!’ said the doctor carelessly. ‘Yes, he is in a bad state. Both lungs gone and heart very weak. I thought he would have passed off days ago.’

"‘This is fearful!’ I said, ‘can nothing be done for him?’

"‘Absolutely nothing; he is past that. The heart is in danger now,’ said the doctor, buttoning his glove. And then he bade me good-night and hurried down the stairs.

"I returned to my friend, and sat by his bedside. I did not know what to say to him, and he guessed my feelings, I think. Between his frequent fits of coughing he whispered to me, but I did not take much notice of what he said. I was too horror-stricken, and was trying to think what could be done for him.

"All at once he raised himself on his elbow and whispered in my ear—

"‘Lock the door, Jack; I want to tell you something.’

"To humour him I got up and locked the door. When I returned to him his eyes were glistening with a strange excitement.

“‘Now, sit down here, Jack. I want to tell you something very important. I am dying—don’t waste words in saying ‘no’—you know I am. I have been a failure. Well, it’s luck. If I had only lived a little longer, Jack, I would have surprised you and all the rest of them!’

“He gasped this out painfully. He was greatly excited. I tried to calm him.

“‘I am bad to-night, very bad—so do not let us waste time. I want to rest after. But, oh, you would never guess my secret!’

“I began to fear he was delirious, but he went on—

“‘It is this, listen! While I have been slaving and devilling, I, too, have had my ambitions. When I was in college I took my life’s motto out of Horace. Don’t you remember the line—*Exegi monumentum ære perennius?* Well, I actually had hopes of fulfilling that, and building a monument more lasting than bronze.’

“There was a long and painful pause.

“‘Just a month or two more of life, Jack, and I might have done it! Now you must do it for me. Complete my work and put my name to it. I have no relations left, but those who knew me will learn that Jim Phelps had just a little of the divine spark of genius in him!’

“He laughed a ghastly laugh that ended in a sob. I was vaguely wondering what to make out of his words.

“‘Under the bed, Jack—look under the bed—a box.’

“I obeyed him, and looking there, discovered a mahogany box of about a foot square.

“His eyes shone when he saw it, and he smiled, and then closed his eyes wearily, smiling still.

“‘You will find it all there. Put my name to it, so that they will know. And you will find—’

“He stopped. Suddenly his eyes opened, and there was a frightened look in them.

“‘Jack!’ he whispered hoarsely, ‘my medicine, quick!’

“I looked at him; he had fallen back in the bed, and his fingers were clutching the bedclothes.

“Thoroughly alarmed, I rushed over to the one table in the room, wildly groping about, and found the medicine bottle and a tumbler there.

“‘I’m coming, Jim!’ I said; ‘here’s your medicine. There now, take it quickly!’

“I approached the bed, snatching the candle from the mantelpiece. But one glance at my poor friend horrified me. Tremblingly I took his hands in mine, but they were limp and heavy. I put the light to his eyes; they were lustreless. He was dead! His heart had evidently failed.

“I replaced the candle on the mantelpiece, unlocked the door, and called up some of the inmates of the house. And then when I found that he was really dead, and that I was not noticed in the general

excitement, all unstrung I crept away, carrying the box with me.

"I had long since given up my chambers, and the lodging to which I returned was an humble one. When I got there, I lay down on my bed a while, and tried to rest and calm myself. And then I made myself some strong coffee, locked my door for the night, and opened my poor friend's box.

"It contained two things only—a gold chain with a locket attached, in which was some black hair—a mother's or sister's or sweetheart's—God knows which, for there was one side of his life of which Jim Phelps had never breathed a word to me—and a mass of dirty manuscript, written in a minute hand on both sides of the paper.

"The manuscript filled me with curiosity. I ran my eye through its pages, and wondered what manner of work was this that was to have made my unhappy friend's name and fortune. I at first just intended to glance through it, for I was tired and unstrung, and badly needed rest; but my eye had not passed over many of the pages before I forgot my weariness, and commenced to carefully examine the manuscript."

Aylworth paused, and selected another cigar. To me he seemed to be an interminable time lighting it, but at last he continued his narrative.

"I read on and on, and the hours went by unreckoned. The manuscript fascinated me and held me enchained. It had no title, and was not properly a novel; it was the record of a life, told in words of fire. I have never read anything so strangely human, so palpitating with life. It was real, and had all the faults of real life, for it was not artistic. Joy and sorrow, philosophy and phantasy, were jumbled together; but it was a wonderful manuscript, and it inspired me. Morning had dawned some time when I had finished the last page, and then, wearied out, I threw myself on my bed."

"But what about your dead friend?" queried Edmonds.

"How—about his burial? Oh, the parish did that; I had no means and could not do it. But let me continue—

"Yes, as I have said, the manuscript inspired me. I re-read it, and thought it over till it haunted me. And then I re-wrote it, and made reason out of chaos.

"One day, after three months of slavish work, I sent the re-written edition to a publisher. He quickly returned it—which proves that sense is not monopolised by publishers, for the next one to whom I forwarded it at once accepted it. The work was brought out shortly afterwards, and caused a great sensation."

"What was the name of the book?" asked Edmonds, who was never, at best, over clever.

Our friend gave a short laugh.

"Alas for fame!" he said. "Did you never hear of my first book?"

"Your first book!" said Hervey, looking bewildered. "But what about Phelps?"

"My dear fellow, what a question to ask! Remember that I was a philosopher. Therefore, I put an important question to myself. What, I asked myself, was the use of fame and money to a dead man who had left no surviving relatives?"

"But the question of honour?" persisted Hervey.

"There are claims that are sometimes stronger than honour in this life," returned Aylworth, "and my story certainly goes to prove that."

And it went to prove something else as well; and that was why our friend, the popular novelist, had written only one really good book—his first, of which his subsequent books had been but disappointing imitations.

CHAPTER II.

NO BRAINS.

AYLWORTH'S story finished, we sat for some moments silently contemplating the fire and smoking. The story had, indeed, been a revelation, and a most unpleasant one. I felt instinctively that a sense of embarrassment hung over us all; that none of us knew what to say; and that we avoided even looking at one another, lest Aylworth should read in our glances thoughts which it would be more courteous to hide if we could.

The silence was becoming unbearable when, as nobody seemed inclined to break it, I did it myself out of sheer desperation.

"I wonder," I said, addressing nobody in particular, "if the man with brains or the man without them fares best in the world's fight?"

"That is easily answered," said Aylworth. "The man without brains, undoubtedly."

"I do not agree with you there," put in Hervey.

"Of course you do not, my dear fellow," replied Aylworth; "for I suppose you take the common view of the subject. No one will confess to being

brainless. If a man succeeds in life, in his own opinion he owes his success to his superior abilities; if he fails, why, either circumstances (over which, I need hardly say, he has had no control—as the phrase goes) have been adverse to him, or else an unappreciative or jealous world has conspired against him. You will always find it so,”

“Well, there’s something in that,” admitted Hervey.

“And then,” went on Aylworth, “there are two good reasons why the man without brains fares best. The first is the good one that the majority of us are not troubled with superlative brains. The second is, that the possessors of exceptional ability are generally cursed, through this gift, with temperaments which render them unsuited to bear ‘the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.’ The dull man does not feel them, or they make him only more determined in his efforts; they madden the man of intellect, who, moreover, frequently puts a great many obstacles in his own path, and generally makes a bad job of life. He is ambitious, for one thing, and most of us know where ambitions end.”

“But it seldom, if ever, pays to be a fool,” said Edmonds.

“I think that that is what it pays best to be,” returned Aylworth, “but, as I have said before, no one will confess himself to be a fool—more than that, no one, I imagine, will confess himself ever to have been a fool.”

"I will plead guilty to the latter indictment, though—that is, with a reservation," Edmonds observed quietly.

"There always is a reservation, you see," murmured Aylworth.

"But my reservation is this, that while I willingly confess myself to have been a fool in the past," replied Edmonds, "I must in self-defence say that I got a rude awakening which caused me to turn over a new leaf. Indeed, the circumstances which brought about this I intended to be the subject of my story, which you may as well hear now, since we are on this discussion."

We settled ourselves back in our chairs to hear the story.

"To begin with," said Edmonds, turning to Aylworth, "you were not quite correct in saying that we have all turned out something else but what we calculated on being, for I do not recollect having, when in college, declared what calling I intended to follow. Indeed, I might have intended to follow none, for all the matter troubled me then.

"Although I have a few grey hairs on my head now, I know I am the youngest of you all. I left the university without taking a degree. I say that I did not read hard enough, and I certainly idled a great deal. You may form your own opinion; but I cannot deny that I was 'ploughed'

several times in the senior examinations. After we parted I did not return to college.

"I went to my people, who were living in the country. I forget what excuses I made for my non-success, but they were well received by my female relatives, who sympathised with me, and believed, in some vague way, that I was a martyr. My father did not take quite the same view of the case, and his remarks were unpleasant in their candour. But this little matter did not weigh on my spirits, and having gained my liberty, I threw aside care, and enjoyed to the full the pleasures of country life in the summer.

"One morning after breakfast my father called me to his study.

"‘Sit down, Tom,’ he said, ‘I want to have a few minutes’ serious conversation with you.’

"I took a seat and waited for what was to come. My father sat down at his desk, and, taking a letter, glanced through it.

"‘First of all,’ he said, ‘I want to ask you a question. What do you intend to become?’

"I was nonplussed, and remained silent. The subject, you see, was a new one to me, and it startled me.

"‘You do not know; you have evidently no preferences—except,’ added my father sarcastically, ‘in a negative way. Well, I am not a wealthy man, and so cannot do more than give you a good

education and a profession to start you in life. Anything I have to leave must go to your mother and sisters, if, in the nature of things, I predecease them. I have tried to give you the good education. We will say nothing more about that.'

"I was not anxious to do so, and felt relieved when he continued :

"'But about this letter. Anticipating your antipathy to embrace any honest calling, I have been in communication with an old friend of mine, a London attorney, the result of which is that I have arranged to apprentice you to him. I have known many men of very poor ability who have made an excellent practice at this branch of the law; the only thing is to be steady and sensible, and I trust that, for your own sake, you will be both. In a few days I shall send you to London, and my friend will have lodgings ready for you. I shall, of course, give you a fair allowance during your apprenticeship; but, mind you, you must not be too long in getting through your course—though I must, I suppose, be prepared to allow a year or so more than the usual time.'

"I was not overjoyed at this news, but I thought it best to remain silent.

"'There is one thing more I want to say to you. I have heard some unpleasant rumours about your conduct in college; well, you must be more careful about your associates in future. I shall

give you letters of introduction to a couple of nice families, and to your mother's uncle—your grand-uncle George. I would particularly impress upon you the advisableness of getting into his good graces. He is single—although he has for years threatened to marry—and is a wealthy man. He is, moreover, so peculiar that he might take a fancy to you—who knows?'

"With this delicate compliment the conversation ended.

"A few days later, true to his word, my father sent me off to London.

"At the time of which I speak, becoming a solicitor was not the comparatively difficult matter that the Incorporated Law Society has made it. I signed my indentures, and settled down to a life of comparative ease. A handsome fee had been paid for me, so I was allowed a good deal of liberty in the office of my father's friend, who was a mild and pleasant-mannered old gentleman. He did not take any particular interest in me once I was installed in the office, and he certainly did not attempt in any way to enlighten me on the mysteries of my future profession. The few hours' mere attendance per day which he required of me was, in his mind, I suppose, sufficient training.

"But I took to my new life wonderfully. It was pleasant to be my own master, and there was so much enjoyment to be had in my leisure hours—

which I did not, by the way, devote to the study of law.

"A few hours spent at my law books convinced me that the matter contained in them was both uninteresting and complex. I did not expect them to be interesting, but I was not prepared to find their subject matter so bewildering to the intellect. My untried brain reeled at the intricacies of the law as expounded by them, and I soon gave up all attempts at understanding them as a bad job. So I put them on the shelf, intending to renew my study when I had had some experience of practical work, by which time I hoped that my brain would have matured somewhat, and acquired a facility for assimilating this now incomprehensible jargon.

"And then I went to see my uncle George. He lived in a quiet street in Kensington, and his house, though not large, conveyed the impression of eminent respectability. It was with some curiosity that one day, having given previous notice, I knocked at the door, which was opened by a quiet-looking man-servant not in livery. I was at once shown in to the master of the house.

"The room into which I was conducted was very handsomely furnished, but in the staid style of a past generation. Everything looked stiff and decorous and impressed me with a feeling of awe.

"My granduncle was seated in an arm-chair

before the fire. He did not rise to greet me, but beckoned me to a seat near him, and then scrutinized me carefully through a large pair of spectacles which he assumed for the purpose.

"He was not a prepossessing old gentleman in appearance. He was, I guessed, anything between seventy and eighty years of age. His clean-shaven face was a peculiar one, thin and criss-crossed with numberless wrinkles. His nose was sharp and aquiline, and his intensely piercing eyes and almost lipless mouth were full of character. He was, as I subsequently found out, unusually tall.

"I felt very uncomfortable under his scrutiny. At last he said, in a sharp but clear voice—

"‘So you are the son of my niece Polly? A fine boy! Her husband has been writing to me about you. And you have come up to London to be made an attorney of. That’s right. They’re d—d rascals, all of them, and that’s why they make money. Your father did well for you—you’ll find out that.’

"He stopped, and then bent over and gave a pull at the bell-cord.

"‘We will have dinner now, and we can chat while eating.’

"So saying he rose, and, gripping me by the arm, brought me to the door, which the servant-man opened at the same time. My uncle, I noticed,

did not require my assistance, for he walked firmly, and did not in the least lean on me.

"We sat down to dinner at a large table in a bleak room, which, like the one we had left, was well furnished in its way.

"When we began dinner, he helped himself to some old sherry, and then, turning to me, said—

"‘You’re a countryman, Thomas—isn’t Thomas your name?—and so I will not ask you to take stimulants. I have got raspberry vinegar and milk—which will you have?’

"I was astonished, and in my confusion chose the raspberry vinegar.

"‘I know what you country boys are,’ he went on, in his peculiar sarcastic voice; ‘all simplicity and goodness. Stimulants are bad. I would not offer them to Polly’s son; it would indeed be wrong.’

"In spite of my mortification, I felt inclined to laugh at the ludicrous way in which he treated me. All through the dinner—which was a most excellent one—he treated me in the same way; and I was alternately covered with mortification or almost moved to laughter. And so I spent the evening with him; he, after dinner, smoking some magnificent cigars—one of which, I need hardly say, he did not offer me.

"It was yet early when he abruptly told me that it was time to go.

“‘I am ashamed of myself,’ he said, ‘to have kept you so long. Country people retire early, I know. But come again—come often, for I should like to have you to chat with, and I have some interesting stories to tell you and some beautiful things to show you. But you must tell me how you get on at the law. You did not stick to your college work and get a degree; but one cannot make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear. Stick to the law, though; it makes money, and any man can become an attorney.’

“And then, filled with mixed feelings, I left him.

“In spite of my rather peculiar welcome, I respected my grand-uncle’s wish, and soon repeated my visit. The second time I went I had to stand pretty much the same ordeal as on the first occasion, and so during my subsequent visits. But I got used to the old man’s eccentricities, and allowed him to make me the butt of his whimsical sarcasms, for I had sense enough to see that it would not be politic of me to take offence. I thought, too, that after a while my patience established me in his good graces, for he certainly began to take an interest in me and my career. Indeed, he was always very particular in his inquiries as to how I got on at the law.

“But I am sorry to say that I became a confirmed idler. I did nothing at all in the way of studying law, and my few hours per day in the office re-

presented all the work I did. I always found some pleasant way in which to spend my evenings, and the introductions my father had furnished me with had made me acquainted with a few nice families. One household I frequented in particular—I need not tell you the name of the people; it is unimportant now—for there I fell violently in love with one of the charming daughters. As I told the family how I stood in my wealthy uncle's good graces—and this did not lose in the telling—my fair one's parents did not discourage my growing affection.

“One evening, about a year after my introduction to my uncle, I paid him one of my frequent visits.

“I found him in unusually good spirits, and prepared myself to pass an evening of martyrdom, for my worthy relative's humour was especially keen and biting when he was in a gay mood.

“After dinner, during the course of which he rallied me in his usual playful manner, he said to me—

“‘And, Thomas, we are going to have a pleasant evening. First of all, I am going to tell you some stories, and after that I shall show a few nice curiosities. If you like to make any remarks during my stories, pray do so, for your intellectual young mind may clear up many points on which I have always been uncertain.’

“And then he drew his chair over to the fire, and commenced his stories. He had spent a great portion of his life in the West Indies, where he had amassed his fortune, and his stories chiefly dealt with those years. He fairly astonished me with the revelations he made, without reservation, of the shady transactions by which he had acquired his wealth, and still worse tales of the slaves he worked on his plantations. I showed my alternate surprise and pain very openly, I imagine, for every now and then he would, with a laugh, break off, and, with much solemnity, ask my advice on the ethics of his actions.

“The stories finished, he ordered in candles, and, lighting one, led me through the house, showing to my wondering eyes many of the treasures and curiosities of which he had just told me. And, as when he had been telling those stories, he now asked my opinion on one thing or another, and, contorting my answers and supplying his own, made me feel very foolish.

“He brought me to his own room, and, opening an escritoire, took out a rolled-up document, which, having unrolled, he asked me to read.

“It was his will, and I read it with intense astonishment, he standing by and smiling at me sardonically the while. I could hardly believe the evidence of my eyes; for by this will I was

left almost all his property, with the exception of a generous life annuity to his housekeeper.

"Without a word he rolled up the document again, and replaced it in the *escritoire*; and in silence we returned downstairs.

"'Well, Thomas,' he said, when we were once more ensconced before the fire, 'are you satisfied?'

"I murmured my excessive gratitude over and over again.

"'Yes, it is duly and properly executed, and you are my heir. You have been a diligent student, and know all about the law—isn't that so?'

"I winced, but made some modest reply, and he chuckled.

"'You may speak of this if you like, but I have one secret to tell you of which you must not let anybody know. It is this. I am an old man, Thomas, and want somebody to take care of me, so I am going to marry my housekeeper, who has been with me for many years. She will take care of me.'

"I was surprised, but tried not to show it, and merely said that I hoped he would be happy. The old man fixed me with his sharp eyes, which seemed to glitter with suppressed merriment.

"'Now, don't tell anybody about this. It will not concern you either. The will is in your

favour, and I shall not alter it. *You*, being steeped in the law, know that it is all right?' And he chuckled again to himself with evident enjoyment. After a couple of minutes' pause he continued:

"'I heard you speak about some friends of your father's, and their pretty daughter. Are you in love with her?'

"The question took me so much by surprise that I stammered out 'Yes' at once.

"'Ah!' said my uncle, 'that is right. I think it is a good thing for men to marry young. But I want you to bring the young lady with you when next you come. I should like to see her.'

"And shortly after, in his usual abrupt way, he dismissed me; but before I went he again referred to his oft-repeated subject:

"'And so you are studying law diligently. I should have known it. I am glad of it. A smart man will always make money as an attorney.'

"I was not long in going to the family of my beloved one, and acquainting them with the joyful news. They all beamed on me, and I was allowed to pay open attentions to Beatrice, and, before I left, received her parents' permission to bring and present her to my worthy relative.

"One evening, a couple of weeks later, I did so. Meanwhile I had, during a visit, heard from my uncle that he had married his housekeeper; but

the function had been so privately—almost secretly—gone through, that practically nobody knew of its having taken place.

“My uncle received us in his characteristic manner. Beatrice, who had the tact of half-a-dozen women, took his peculiarities in good part, and humoured him.

“We had dinner, as usual, only it was an especially well-appointed one.

“I did not enjoy it much though, for my uncle made me the mark of most of his observations. He praised my high abilities, my keen observation, and my studious habits with such apparent sincerity that I felt very unhappy and uncomfortable. He told Beatrice that she was indeed lucky in securing such a charming young man as I, who one day would be an ornament to his profession; and I had to sit out all this, although I felt sometimes as if I would choke.

“‘My dear,’ he said suddenly to Beatrice, ‘can you make a beautiful pudding like that?’ pointing to a rice pudding.

“‘Oh, yes, I think so, Mr. Eldon,’ she replied, smiling, though surprised, ‘I have learned a good deal about cookery.’

“‘I am indeed glad of that,’ returned my diabolical uncle, ‘for now I know that my dear nephew will be well taken care of.’

“And this was the way he went on.

"After what was to me a painful evening, we left, but not before he again put his eternal question about my progress in my studies. Beatrice was very silent about my uncle, but she said that he was very old, and, poor dear man, would doubtless soon be called to pay the debt to nature.

"And so it seemed, for soon after that he appeared to be breaking up. Indeed it was so, for not many months later he lay on his death-bed.

"I was called to his side when he was dying. He told me that, when he died, a letter he had written to me would be sent to me; and then he bade me good-bye, and I was conducted out of the room. That afternoon, a few hours later, he died.

"You may imagine my feelings at this time. No letter arrived on the following morning, so I went to the office as usual. But I could not do my work—such as it was—that day, and sat at my desk dreaming of my coming wealth, and what I would do with it.

"When I returned home I found an envelope, deeply edged with black, and addressed in my uncle's handwriting, lying on my table.

"I eagerly tore open the envelope, and nearly fainted as I read the letter. It ran—

"MY DEAR THOMAS,—If you had studied a little

C

law, you would have discovered that the will which I made in your favour was rendered invalid by my subsequent marriage, and you would have drawn my attention to the matter, for which evidence of acumen I would have made another will on the same terms. But, as you did not say so, my property is otherwise bequeathed, for I would not have it go to a fool. I am leaving you the sum of one hundred pounds, however, with which to purchase yourself a few law books.

“ ‘Your affectionate Uncle,

“ ‘GEORGE ELDON.’ ”

We all laughed heartily, with the exception of the unfortunate Edmonds.

“And you see,” he concluded, “that is how, instead of being a wealthy man, I am a comparatively poor one, and lost both love and money—for I never saw Beatrice again—all through having no brains in my youth.”

“But one grows out of that in time,” said Aylworth consolingly.

There was a suspicion of sarcasm in his voice, though.

CHAPTER III.

A TRAIL OF FIRE.

"I HAVE been thinking hard thoughts of you, Hervey," said Aylworth; "I have been thinking how appropriately these words of Seneca would apply in your case—'There are some who live without any design at all, and only pass in the world like straws on a river—they do not go; they are carried.'"

Hervey's fat, good-humoured face assumed a half serious, half comical expression.

"I thought," he replied, "that we were all straws in the wind in this world, more or less powerless when fate whisks us along; but you have made a water-dog of me. Why this distinction?"

"I am very serious," returned Aylworth, "for, while we have toiled slavishly for years, I have never heard that you did anything to acquire the good fortune of the landed estates you possess, or did any useful work since you came to them so mysteriously."

"*Un Chateau en Espagne*—and a real one, too!"

I interpolated. "That is a piece of luck which require some explaining."

"Come now, you fellows," replied Hervey, sitting up on the sofa, and assuming a really serious countenance for once, "you are really too hard on me. If a wonderful piece of luck had not befallen me, I would, I am sure, have been as hard a worker as any of you. And I would not—could not—tell you this story in my justification, only that the woman who figured in it is dead some years."

And at this I, for one, kept back the reproach that I might have hinted, if not openly spoken; for the man who marries a woman of means with the intention of living an idle life on her money has not my respect. So we waited in silence to hear Hervey's story.

"This story of mine," he began, "is a peculiar one; for you can call it serious or funny, just as you like to view the matter. To me it is serious more than anything else; but you can give your opinion on it and on myself when I have finished the tale.

"Beyond the fact that I distinguished myself in mathematics, my college course was not a particularly illustrious one—indeed, in all other branches of study but the one mentioned I did very poorly. However, this just suited my prospects, because it had been my intention to become an engineer. So I joined my elder brother, who had, without

the unnecessary digression of a university education, before this qualified and got into practice as a civil engineer. He was one of a firm, and I entered into a kind of informal apprenticeship there. Although I had stuck to my mathematics very well, I was not more partial to work than most young fellows; but what I did in assisting at surveys was not back-breaking. Indeed, I suppose I may as well confess that the less work I had to do the better I was pleased with my existence; for I have always had to fight just a little natural inclination to indolence.

"I had been slightly over a year there, when the firm—who were largely concerned in railway undertakings—got a contract for the construction of a railway in Spain. My brother, who was somewhat of a linguist, was sent to that country to take charge of the undertaking, and I was left behind. Shortly afterwards a cousin of mine entered the firm under much the same conditions as myself. This individual deserves a few words. In the first he was a Hervey, like myself, and—the deuce take him!—like me, too, could prefix 'Charles' to it. This was bad enough, and was the cause of a good deal of bother to both of us, but it was nothing compared with the fact that a really astonishing physical likeness existed between us. I thought it hard that while I had the good sense not to infringe the copyright of my brother's looks,

this cousin had the impudence to be the exact counterpart of myself. I say this because, being somewhat his senior, I had a right to my personality. But, at all events, the unfortunate similarity between us caused no end of trouble in the place. It was this, then, that instilled in me a sudden longing to leave it. There was no doubting the fact that either my cousin or I must clear out; and I decided to do so.

"My brother, a man not generally given to writing letters of a florid nature, had, since his arrival in Spain, been sending me such delightful accounts of that country that I quickly made up my mind to join him there, and get a situation in connection with the railway works. He fell to the idea, and the matter was quickly managed. Great events frequently arise out of trivial causes; so it was fated to be in this modern case of the two Dromios."

Hervey paused to refill his pipe.

"End of the first chapter?" I queried.

"Yes," he returned. "The second chapter of my strange romance opens in Spain, after a pleasant passage of the much-maligned Bay of Biscay, but it was summer then. Out of curiosity I went on to Madrid from Bilbao, but I did not get much reward for my pains, as that most wretchedly-placed of all European capitals is a sun-scorched and deserted inferno during the

summer. A couple of days there were as much as I could stand, and, after a tedious journey, during which I had, through my limited knowledge of Spanish, to put up with all kinds of discomforts in dirty *fondas* and scarcely better *posadas*, I at last arrived, considerably sun-blistered and mosquito-bitten, at the city of Granada, where my brother met me.

"I was a couple of days recovering from the effects of that journey, and then my brother, who was never a very considerate man, put me to work at the head-quarters of the new railway, a section of which, running north of Granada, was now being laid. I shall not bother you with an account of what I had to do, which was mostly office-work and superintending. All the surveying in that province had been done, so that the permanent way was in course of active construction. The heat was something fearful, and much work was impossible—in my case, at any rate—during many hours of the day. Exposure to the sun meant scorched face and hands, with one's skin afterwards coming off in little flakes, not to speak of consuming thirst, the temptation to quench which, in an over-indulgence in the native oranges, meant laying oneself open to a probable attack of cholera, isolated cases of which were constantly occurring; and the nights, if they brought coolness—which they did not always—also brought the mosquitoes

out in all their liveliness. Under ordinary circumstances these latter pests would not trouble one so much, but when one had to sleep in temporary buildings, or in dirty little *fondas*, it was another thing.

"However, notwithstanding all this, it was a glorious time for me. Nobody insisted on my working hard, and I certainly did not insist on it myself, so that I had plenty of time to look about and amuse myself. The wonderful old city of Granada delighted me, with its quaint houses of another age, and its picturesque men and charming women. Oh, you fellows don't know how handsome women can be, unless you have seen the daughters of Spain—that is, of course, the young ones. When they get on in years the laurels go to other countries. Often have I stood listening to the music of the guitar, as it sounded in the moonlit streets and dark romantic alleys of that strange old-world city; often by moonlight have I wandered in the deserted ruins of the Alhambra, till I half believed I was visiting an enchanted palace, that would vanish with the dawning of day.

"Oh, it was indeed a wonderful experience. Spain, as you know, is in many respects a land of dreams, a land in which the romance that elsewhere died centuries ago still flourishes, a land which the disillusioning trend of modern civilisation has

strangely spared. And the province of Granada, the garden of Spain, is perhaps the most romantic spot of all Spain, with its still remaining Eastern relics of Moorish occupation. In spite of my prosaic occupation, I had plenty of leisure, and my soul drank in——”

“I think,” interrupted Edmonds, fidgeting uneasily, “that you had better cut this part a bit.”

“Yes,” said Aylworth, “we can understand that your soul got steeped in the dream-like life of Spain, and was prepared for a romance. Who was she?”

“Well,” said Hervey, rubbing his chin meditatively, “of all the unromantic, dull-souled fellows! —but it occurred in this way.

“I was seated in a rocking-chair one warm evening, in a room in the temporary buildings, peacefully smoking cigarettes, when my brother entered and threw himself wearily down on a chair. After helping himself to a copious draught of lemon-squash from a jug that stood on a table near at hand (my lemon-squash, of course), he said—

“‘Dreaming as usual, Charles. I hope you’ve not managed to get in love?’

“I languidly reassured him on this point.

“‘But,’ said William, ‘I know from your temperament that you will soon be. Now, look here, my lad, I don’t want to have the expense and

bother of burying you in a foreign land. Serenading in this blessed place frequently leads to a sudden and disastrous acquaintance with some unknown rival's *machete*.'

"I was quite aware of the fact. Stabbing in the dark is a very common occurrence in sunny Spain.

"‘So,’ went on my brother, in the most prosaic tone of voice—he would have suited you fellows down to the ground, he had so little romance in his nature—‘I have made up my mind to introduce you to a fascinating señorita, whom you may adore if you will. I shall start with you for her place in an hour’s time, so be prepared.’

"‘But are you gone in that direction?’ I asked meaningly.

"‘Edith,’ replied my brother shortly, leaving the room. This was to remind me of his plighted troth to Edith West, and I hardly needed it to know that her heart was safe in his keeping.

"Punctually an hour later, my brother and I set out on our journey on a couple of horses. In spite of all efforts, I could not extract any information from him. I would know who she was when I was introduced; that had to satisfy me.

"But I had not long to wait. Leaving the city of Granada, we rode on the Seville road for about four miles, and then turned into a side road going in a northern direction. A short journey brought

us to a fine but ancient-looking mansion, standing in large enclosed grounds. This was our destination.

"I could do so, but as this tale must be a fairly long one, I cannot linger over a description of that strange old house, which had been the home of a noble family for numberless generations; all I can say is that it was a place of wonder to me, and it bore in its old panelled rooms, and its curious furniture, rich plate and family pictures, the evidence of a proud past. And Don Garcia de Maguez, the head of the household, was a typical Spaniard; a kind man at heart, but having all that outward bearing of a haughty courtesy which has given to his countrymen the reputation of being the proudest race on earth. With him lived his widowed sister, a lady some years his senior. And then there was—Catalina."

Hervey paused a moment, as if lost in some recollections, then he continued:—

"When I was presented to them, I wondered inwardly how my brother got on such familiar footing with such a household; but he was evidently a welcome visitor, and I, as his brother, was received most kindly.

"And, of course, you wish to know about Catalina. If you want to know my first impressions, I can hardly tell you them. I only know that when my brother presented me to her

I saw before me one of the most beautiful of women that a man could behold ; and therefore I cannot describe her either, beyond saying that she was tall and graceful, about eighteen years of age, and that her face was perfect in features, and she possessed the most glorious dark Spanish eyes I had ever seen.

“That first visit was a beautiful dream to me. In spite of the presence of her aunt, who was a pretty strict duenna, Catalina allowed me to monopolise her attention, and, in deference to my defective knowledge of Spanish, we had a charming conversation together in indifferent French ; but, in spite of our want of fluency in that language, I think that our conversation was an eloquent one, for young people can speak in other ways than with their tongues. The only modern article in the house was a piano, on which she played very brilliantly ; and afterwards, when the darkness came on, we all sat out under the verandah, and she initiated me into the mysteries of the native guitar. And you must remember that neither her father nor her aunt spoke French.

“What need I say more about my thoughts of her, for it is hardly necessary to tell you that I fell wildly in love with Catalina. If my brother had meant to get my affections engaged he had certainly succeeded ; but he had no reason for being

thankful for his offices, for from that day forward I was unsettled in mind and unable to give my attention to my work. When I had leisure, and as often as I could with propriety visit the place, I went ostensibly to visit the old Don, but, my Spanish being limited, as I have said before, I always succeeded in having much of Catalina's society. She soon guessed what my thoughts of her were, for I adored her openly. Oh, the tortures she made me endure! Sometimes she was all smiles, and indescribably sweet and gracious, sending me into the seventh heaven of happiness; at other times she was haughty, indifferent. But she would change, and be all things to me at one visit, so that I never knew whether I was most happy or most miserable in her company; only in my heart I dared not think that I seriously found favour in her eyes.

"At last I tried to face the matter out in a manly way, and thought for some days over the line of action that it would be most prudent and honourable to take. I thought it over fairly and logically, and, although it caused me much inward struggle, I came to a just conclusion.

"My brother and I had retired to rest in our room one night, when I mustered up courage to speak on the matter. The candle had been extinguished, and all was quiet but for the low buzzing of some stray mosquitoes which were trying to get inside

the bed curtains, when I suddenly said in the darkness—

“‘Will, I want to speak to you a few minutes before you go asleep. I want to tell you something very serious.’

“‘Out with it then,’ said my brother sleepily.

“‘I have made up my mind to return to England,’ I said.

“‘The deuce!—why, what’s the matter?’

“‘You know well enough,’ I replied: ‘I’ve gone and got in love with Catalina de Maguez.’

“My brother laughed rather unfeelingly; for an engaged fellow he had awfully little sentiment.

“‘It’ll do you no harm,’ he said.

“‘I am not going to waste too many words over the matter,’ I said, somewhat angrily; ‘but I shall tell you once and for all that I have fallen so deeply in love with Catalina that it would be agony for me to be constantly seeing her, and knowing that she could never be mine.’

“‘Well, I’m sorry you’re so knocked up about it,’ said William in a kinder tone. ‘I thought that you had more sense. But I am glad for your own sake that you have no false hopes. Only the other day the old Don was actually boasting to me about his ancestor, and he spoke of him as quite a modern ancestor—Alonzo de Maguez who belonged to the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, and

who received high honours for the valorous part he took in flinging Boabdil—Boabdil *El Chico*—out of Granada and of Spain in 1491. And although the family fortunes have declined, the fair Catalina will be a pretty considerable heiress for this part of the world, so I do not think that an engineering assistant would have much chance of gaining her hand. But, since you have shown some good sense, you will show more, I am sure, by forgetting all about her in time.’

“I murmured a sonorous native curse, and replied energetically—

“‘It’s no use your talking, Will; I cannot forget her. I must go; I’ve made up my mind to that. You know our cousin Charlie is eating his head off to come out here. Well, I have written to him to come as soon as he can and take my place. I am quite decided about this.’

“‘Well, you’re an infernal ass,’ replied my brother shortly, and with that the conversation lapsed.

“But I really meant what I had said, for I wished to act with fairness towards myself. I soon received a reply from my cousin, who jumped at the offer I made him. The line now ran up close to the house of my fair charmer, and I was constantly on the spot helping in superintending its construction; but here the metals had only been roughly laid down, and the road was unballasted.

“I had well judged my weakness, and acted

wisely, for, as I knew, I could not be near Catalina without hungering to see her constantly. Therefore we frequently met, and, although I tried to be merely civil towards her, she always succeeded in fascinating me anew every time I saw her: I am afraid that her coquetry piqued me, and that we both played at a comedy.

"I did not tell her of my intention to leave Spain until my cousin arrived. Then I told her—without mentioning my cousin—when we were in company with her father, and although the news was received with expressions of regret, they were, under the circumstances, conventional. Before leaving that evening I met her alone for a minute, and then she gave me a look of scorn out of her proud, dark eyes.

"And after that I avoided seeing her, for I felt as if I had been acting a mean and guilty part, though God knows I had acted with scrupulous conscientiousness. But now I must hurry on to the strange part of my story."

Hervey paused once more, and lit a cigar. When he recommenced he spoke more slowly and gravely.

"It happened in this way. My cousin took to his work with zest, and seemed to enjoy it. Although it is no part of an engineer's work to drive engines, in that wild place all of us knew how to perform that duty, and took an engine

up and down the finished part of the line occasionally. My cousin particularly fancied this kind of recreation.

"Well, one day some oil and other stores had to be fetched from a station in the Murcia direction. I had promised to go up with an engine for them, and, after coming back to head-quarters, near Granada, I had an appointment to keep in the evening with Catalina. You see I was going away in a couple of days, and the time had come for me to bid her a final farewell.

But at the last moment my plans were somewhat altered. My brother gave me a message to deliver in a village some distance away to the north-west, and the duty of bringing down the stores devolved upon my cousin. It did not matter much to me, for my horse would bring me to my destination, and back in time for the evening's interview. Indeed, the village lay about a dozen miles due north of the residence of Don Garcia de Maguez.

"It was early afternoon when I set out. For that fine climate the day was an extremely disagreeable one. The sun had been very hot in the earlier part of the day, but now the sky was clouded with heavy masses of broken clouds that kept constantly shifting, and a fitful easterly wind had arisen, and was increasing in violence. It took me longer than I had reckoned upon to

D

reach my destination, and there a delay occurred in transacting my business, which had to do with the engaging of some extra labourers, for it was now autumn, and we wanted to get as much work as possible done before the wet season came on. Night had fallen when I turned my horse's head southward, in the direction of Catalina's house.

"A beautiful moon had risen, and illuminated the way, for the sky had considerably cleared, though the wind had decidedly increased. I rode on somewhat slowly, for the road was a mere track, and in some parts overgrown with masses of Mexican cactus and the luxuriant undergrowth belonging to this almost tropical part of Spain. Perhaps I was also in too meditative a mood to push along quickly, or perhaps my horse was tired; but certainly my progress was a leisurely one; and I was glad, for now that the time had come, I felt it a hard and bitter thing to have to say a few commonplace words of farewell, and part from Catalina without letting her know my feelings. And I would go away, and would never know what her thoughts were of me—and even in them she might wrong me. Indeed, it seemed to me that fate was very cruel and bitter to me. Rather hyper-romantic for an engineer, you say? Well, the most practical man has some sentiment in him.

"About five miles from my journey's end the

scene changed somewhat. The trees, which grew very thickly in the district through which I had passed, now became scattered and few in number. Later on I would come to an unwooded tract, which spread to the north of Catalina's home.

"I was just getting out of the wooded district, and was absently watching the shadows of the trees cast by the moon, when a sudden glow to the left, beyond the trees, claimed my attention. I was surprised, and was unable to conjecture what it might be. The light flashed by a clearing, and was then hidden by a dense mass of wood. I pushed on quickly, and got beyond the trees just in time to see a trail of fire rushing from the left in the distance, about three miles away. It passed like a meteor, and disappeared beyond Catalina's home. It did not then pass on to the right, but threw a glow into the sky, showing out the black outline of the house.

"Horried, for I had a vague idea of what had happened, I put my horse to a gallop in that direction. I had not gone a mile when the animal, meeting some obstruction, fell, flinging me clean out of the saddle. I was considerably shaken, though uninjured; but my horse was lamed, and I had to lead him by the bridle.

"I was a considerable time covering the remainder of the distance to the house. When I was just at it I saw a man in my path. It was

one of the servants, an ugly old man whom I knew only by his nick-name of 'Pateta,' the Spanish equivalent for 'Old Nick.' I called to him.

"The man, on hearing my voice, stood still and looked in my direction. The moonlight fell upon me, and when he saw me he gave one long shriek, and fled towards the house. Very much mystified, I followed him as quickly as I could.

"I passed round the shrubbery, and came to the south side of the house, and there, in the distance beyond, I saw the cause of the trail of fire. Some rolling stock in flames had come down the rails, and had been thrown off the rails on the unballasted track.

"One glance showed me this, but I turned my attention to the courtyard of the house, where I could hear voices and many footsteps, and whence came the reflection of lights.

"I came round and entered the spacious *patio*. I stood at the gateway and looked in, and then an extraordinary sight met my eyes. There was a small crowd of men and women collected there, among whom were the members of the household. Some among them carried lanterns, and others torches. I moved forward. Don Garcia was standing in a clearing of the crowd with a few of his servants, and at his feet Catalina was kneeling, bending over the inanimate form of a man. She seemed to be in the wildest despair, and wept

bitterly. One look showed me this, then I left my horse, and came out of the shadow.

"If I had been the devil himself my advent could not have caused more consternation. Every woman who saw me gave a suppressed shriek; every man seemed petrified with fear and astonishment at sight of me, and some threw down their lanterns and torches and disappeared. When I came up to the Don, and he saw me, he seemed turned to stone. But he recovered himself, and putting his arm round his daughter, waived me off, and then, giving some hurried directions to those around him, half carried half led away Catalina.

"But she had seen me, and, after one bewildered glance, she fainted in her father's arms, and he bore her off.

"With a few words I reassured the now greatly diminished crowd, and stooped down to look at the injured man—my cousin Charles. He was burnt, but not severely; the smoke had evidently been the cause of rendering him unconscious. We bore him indoors immediately, and soon had a doctor attending to him."

Hervey stopped, and then Aylworth put in—

"Rather a pretty tangle that. What happened?"

"Well, the obvious. Later in the evening I caught Catalina. She would not look at me at first; she wanted to run away from me, but I

brought her out to the verandah under the moonlight, and nobody hindered me. And I told her all—how could I do otherwise?—while she listened with flashing eyes and compressed lips. But her eyes grew soft and gentle after a while, and her lips smiled—need I tell you more?”

“No, not about that,” I said, laughing; “but how did your cousin manage to make a holocaust of himself?”

Here the door opened, and an elderly shabby-genteel man, a stranger to us, entered, and coming forward with a pipe in his hand, stopped at the table.

“Simply enough,” answered Hervey. “In some mysterious way his stores caught on fire—there were cases of matches among the things—and the strong easterly wind blew the smoke on him when he tried to stop, and so, to avoid being smothered, he had to run on past Granada, till he was flung off the unballasted part of the track.”

CHAPTER IV.

A PLUNGE INTO LETHE.

THE shabby-genteel man left his position by the table, and moved towards the door, as if he thought himself in the way.

"Pardon me," said Aylworth to him, "but there is no necessity for you to give up your intention of having a smoke. We have been only telling some stories to pass the time, and can make room for you near the fireplace."

The shabby-genteel man turned back, and murmuring a few words of acknowledgment to the speaker, came hesitatingly towards us. We moved our chairs to make room for him, and he took a seat to the left of the fireplace. I had dropped the evening paper I had been holding on my lap, and he, in passing, picked it up, and, after awkwardly asking if I required it, took it to his seat. He drew out the pipe he had put in his pocket; but Aylworth at once offered him a cigar, which he accepted, and, having lighted it, he commenced to read the paper.

Aylworth fixed me with his glance, and I knew what it meant.

"I am to entertain you now, I suppose," I said with a groan. "Well, in accordance with our scheme, I presume, it is to be the history of the turning-point in my career."

"If possible, yes," answered Aylworth, "though a doctor can usually find a story worth telling even if it does not deal with any particular turning-point in his life's history."

"That's perfectly true," I answered, "and I could tell you many such. But, as it happens, the chief and most wonderful experience I have ever had was instrumental in bringing me whatever modest prosperity I have enjoyed. I say modest, because, unlike you, I have achieved no fame, nor has wealth come to me, as in the case of Hervey. But, after the darkness of despair and tribulation, the dawn of a brighter life came to me, and came strangely."

"Well, that's all we want to hear, then," said Hervey, refilling his pipe, and settling down comfortably, "so fire away."

"To begin in the usual way, then, I must draw your attention to the fact that when we were in college together, I was reading for Orders. I had weighed two careers in my mind before making my choice—divinity and medicine—and I chose divinity. When we parted, then, I was reading for the Church.

"But fate willed that I should never become

a clergyman. When I went home for the vacation that time, certain circumstances induced me to change my mind. My father was a country doctor, and my elder brother had chosen the same career, and my father had hoped that he would succeed to his practice in the course of time; but my brother caught a malignant fever in the discharge of his duties, and died after a few days' illness. It was a terrible blow to the old man, who, losing his eldest son, now centred his hopes in me. I had not been long home when he confided to me his desire that I should take up the study of medicine. I acceded to his wish.

"That autumn I came to London, and commenced my medical studies. Twenty-six was a little late to begin, but there were many older men than that among the students, and only in their first year; but, then, the course was only a three years' one at that time.

"I paid occasional visits to my home during those three years, and was grieved to find that my father was rapidly ageing. He was a widower, living a lonely life, and was very impatient for the time when I should come back to him duly qualified to practise. Besides, a young and energetic rival had come into his district, and this made him all the more anxious about me.

"The very day on which I qualified, I received

the news of my father's death, which occurred very suddenly. I hastened home at once; and a couple of days later, the sparsely-attended funeral being over, I had to face the responsibilities of being the sole master of my late poor father's house. I had dreamt of a happier future for myself.

"I made up my mind to endeavour to worthily fill my father's place, and carry out what I knew had been his wishes; but, although I did my best, I soon discovered that I was not a success. I had been so much away that I found myself practically a stranger, and I had not the *savoir faire* to win the esteem of my late father's patients, and did not make many advances in that direction. Besides, the doctor who had settled himself down in the district some time before had been very successful in ingratiating himself with the local residents.

"And, after all, I did not much care. I had come back more as a matter of duty than of inclination, for during my stay in London I had become attached to the life of the metropolis, and I am sure that I could never have settled down contentedly in the country.

"Is it not a remarkable thing that, no matter how carefully we may lay our life's plans, we generally act on impulse when it comes to the great issues. One day, then, I did a mad act. I sold my practice—or what remained of it—to my

rival for a mere song, disposed of the interest in the house, and, having through rapid negotiations procured a modest—but for me expensive—house in London, brought my household gods there, and fastened my brass plate on my door—all within a couple of weeks of deciding on this most momentous move.

“It was, as I have said, a mad act. There I found myself, an unknown man, setting up as a rival among so many known and experienced men who found it difficult to maintain their position. But I had a few friends, and I maintained a rather imposing household, and lived on my capital, and awaited patiently for the patients who would be attracted by the name of ‘Charles Carter, M.D.,’ on the door.

“After one year of waiting, my heart died within me, for it seemed that in the cast of the dice fate had been against me. A few patients, attracted by curiosity, or sent to me by my couple of medical friends, visited me, and were treated more or less satisfactorily by me; but there the matter ended. I had failed to make a practice, and my medical friends being busy with their own affairs soon forgot me and my struggles. My capital would last but a few months longer, and I dreaded to think what the end of that period would bring to me. But, having made my venture, I was determined to abide by it till the end: perhaps I had not the moral courage to make

a bold stroke in another direction before it would be too late to avert the threatened ruin.

"And then, to crown my troubles, I fell in love. I say to crown my troubles, for you can imagine how hopeless and bitter it was for a man in my desperate circumstances to fall in love; for, without taking a pessimistic view of the tender passion, we must all admit that a certain amount of worldly prosperity should be attained before a man can fall in love without harbouring a madness. And truly love, when it comes to a poor man, is worse than any other kind of madness.

"She was the daughter of a Dr. Graham, who lived in the same street as I. This doctor was an old man, and had in his day been a physician of very considerable note; however, at this time he did not practise much, but buried himself in scientific researches of a somewhat peculiar nature. He had been a nerve specialist, and he now devoted the declining years of his life to the investigation of some of the perplexing problems of the nervous system, and psycho-cerebral problems in particular. This much I understood from rumour. Once I had through chance been called to a consultation with him, and at the time I had hopes that the occurrence would make an opening for me. But it did not. It only made me acquainted—by another chance—with his daughter, whose bright eyes deprived me of my peace of mind from that day forth.

"Every Sunday I saw her in church, and, when I met her then and otherwise, I received an amiable little salute. That was all. And still I felt intuitively that there was a kind of pity in her look sometimes—that she, in her woman's heart, knew that my lonely venture had been a failure, and that despair was in my breast. What other thoughts lay behind her sweet blue eyes I could not guess at that time.

"And so the time went on, and the crash grew piteously near. All hope had died out of my heart—all hope, and the energy that hope brings—and I felt powerless to avert my coming fate, or make any plans for my after future. I had fallen into a lethargic state—into that frame of mind in which a man confesses that the world has been too much for him; that he has played and lost, and must passively await the issue.

"The day at last came when my resources had almost come to an end. One determination only was left to me, and that was to throw up everything when my capital failed. I was, at any rate, an honourable man, and would not carry on a hopeless venture till I became encumbered with debts which I could never pay. And so I would soon surrender my house and dismiss my servants; then—well, I could not think what would happen then."

At this moment the door opened, and several members of the club, who had been upstairs in the

billiard-room, entered. They settled down quietly enough, having heard me talking when they came in, and so I thought it just as well to continue my story.

"One morning, at this time, I was sitting in my consulting-room, when a ring came at the patient's bell. It was a quick—even a frantic—ring, and the unwonted sound momentarily aroused me from the sad reverie into which I had fallen.

"There was a sound of quick footsteps in the hall, and then my man James knocked at the door and entered the room, followed, to my astonishment, by Miss Graham.

"I started from my seat, but had not time to say anything before Miss Graham, who bore signs of the most acute distress, came towards me and gasped out—

"'Oh, Dr. Carter, come at once to our house. My poor father—I do not know what is the matter with him! O God, he cannot be dead! perhaps there is hope yet! perhaps—'

"The poor girl broke off in a burst of passionate weeping. She had evidently put on her hat and come straight to me. I led her to a chair, but did not waste time in attempting to assuage her distress. Neither did I ask her any questions, for I would soon see what had occurred.

"'I shall accompany you at once, Miss Graham,' was all I said. A minute later we left the house together.

"I had little time to conjecture what had happened before we arrived at Dr. Graham's residence. A glance at the house showed me that the blinds had been drawn, and when we entered I saw an expression of consternation on the faces of the servants, who were grouped about the hall, where, too, there were several of the doctor's neighbours talking together in a low voice. What all this implied was unmistakable.

"I followed Miss Graham, who quickly led me past the loiterers—who became silenced at our advent—and up a flight of stairs, when we stopped at a door. With trembling hand she turned the handle and opened the door. It was her father's room.

"I entered the room with her, and gave a quick glance around. The room was rather a large one, but the one window which it contained was disproportionately small, while the ceiling was decidedly low. The window was somewhat heavily curtained, and so the room was very badly lighted, but then the blind was drawn. The window faced me as I entered. On the right was situated the fireplace, while a large, old-fashioned, wooden bed stood out from the wall on the left-hand side. There were several tables in different parts of the room, and these were covered with a disordered profusion of books and various kinds of instruments, philosophical and medical.

"Two other persons were in the room when we entered. They were doctors, neighbours too, and had evidently just arrived, for as I approached the bed one of these gentlemen lit a candle, and drew aside the bed-curtains.

"Miss Graham's grief now broke out afresh, and I thought it better to take her gently by the arm and induce her to leave the room. She clung to me and wanted to remain, but I prevailed upon the poor girl to leave us for a few minutes, and saw her out of the room. Then I returned to the bed.

"I found the two doctors bending over the figure of Dr. Graham, as he lay, rigid and pallid, in his bed. We three examined him for any signs of life in the usual way, but a glance was almost sufficient to show us the futility of these formalities. The old man lay there statue-like, cold and pulseless; he had evidently been dead some hours. He had never in life been very vigorous. As a bookworm and a sedentary student of his chosen science, his latter days had been mostly passed, and he might have been suffering from some unsuspected disease long before his death. We then consulted together, and could only conjecture that weak action of the valves of the heart, an infirmity not unlikely in an elderly man, had terminated fatally; but as, of course, we could not give a certificate, an inquest would have to be held. That was all.

"On me devolved the painful task of conveying the unhappy truth to the sorrow-stricken daughter. Her grief was very bitter and distressing to witness ; but even at that moment it gave me a feeling of gratification that it was to me she turned for comfort. I soothed her as best I could, and unconsciously in that moment of sorrow she came to know the secret of my heart, and I the secret of hers. I left her, promising to call round again during the day, and then I went to see about the many arrangements that medical jurisprudence exacts under the circumstances of a sudden death of this kind.

"Later on in the day I called again. It was towards evening. The body had been locked up, but Mary—I may as well call her Mary now—the elderly housekeeper, and I went to the room. I do not know why we should have done so ; indeed, I expostulated, but Mary would see her father again.

"The poor girl dropped on her knees at the bedside, and I, respecting her sorrow, moved away. I lighted a small lamp that stood on one of the tables, and with curiosity examined several manuscripts that lay about. Several pages of newly-written manuscript engaged my attention. They were evidently the continuation of a work upon which the deceased had been engaged. Out of curiosity I read them, and as I read I came to a strange and weird story that made my heart

E

beat more quickly, and instilled an indefinable fear into my mind. It was with difficulty that I repressed an exclamation.

"Shortly afterwards we left the room.

"A couple of relatives came to the house later on, to stay with and comfort Mary. I soon left, saying that I would have to come again in the morning, to attend the inquest.

"I returned to my house and took my tea. Then I went to my study to read. But I could not read, for, fight against it as I would, the doctor's manuscript had put into my head a strange and weird possibility which I could hardly comprehend or define. For some hours I sat in a kind of agony, thinking the matter over, for this idea haunted and even tortured me.

"It was nine o'clock when, overcome by my own fears, and under an uncontrollable impulse, I put on my coat and hat, and returned to the house of death.

"Arrived at the house, I asked to see Mrs. Marston, the housekeeper, and she came to me in some surprise. Miss Mary, she told me, had retired to her room, worn out with grief, at which I felt relieved. Then I went with her into the consulting parlour, and told her the reason of my unexpected visit. I wanted to take another look at the corpse, and I wished to do it quietly, and without disturbing any of the other inmates of the

house. I asked her to procure a light and to accompany me to the room. She complied, but I could see that she was surprised and rather startled at my request.

"Noiselessly we ascended the stairs, and, quietly unlocking the door, entered the room. Everything was as we had left it, and now with the coming of the night the room was peculiarly still, with that chilly feeling about the atmosphere which always seems to haunt the chamber of death.

"I took the candle from Mrs. Marston, and went over to the bed. The old man lay rigid and still, and as I looked upon him the indefinable feeling that was half hope half fear went out of my heart, for I was convinced that I was, indeed, gazing on a corpse. I carefully examined the body again, but my examination only brought to me the same conclusion as we had arrived at in the morning. One thing there was that was unusual in the case of the death of a man of his age, and that was that the *rigor mortis* had not as yet set in, although he must now have been dead about eighteen hours.

"The light the candle gave was very bad, and just then, for the first time, I noticed that there was a gas bracket situated near the bed. I asked the housekeeper to light the gas. She took the candle from me and did so, blowing out the candle

afterwards. Then she came back to my side. But the light was not strong enough ; I asked her to raise it, and, if necessary, take the shade off the bracket. She went to raise the light, and, unfortunately, turning the tap the wrong way, put it out.

“ We were left in darkness—or almost darkness, for the moon, shining on the blind, illuminated the room slightly. I hurriedly asked, in a whisper, were there any matches in the room. There were not. This was awkward, for the candle had been lighted from the gas in the consulting-room. My companion said that she would have to go and look for matches, and then she stole out and left me there alone.

“ I crept over to the window, cautiously avoiding all the obstacles, and, noiselessly raising the blind, looked out. The night was a very fine one, cloudless but cold, and the full moon, which had just risen high enough to be clear of the earth’s mists, flooded everything in a glory of silvery light. I stood admiring the scene passively. Moonlight has always had a saddening effect upon me, and at the moment many things made my thoughts take a sombre bent. They turned on my own unfortunate position, this death, and what it had been the cause of revealing to Mary and to myself, and lastly, the failure of what had seemed to me to be an inspired hope. Impatient at my own thoughts, I turned round and gazed into the

room. The window, as I have said before, was heavily curtained, and I, standing in the aperture of the curtains, obstructed all but a small ray of moonlight, which, coming over my head, made a bright spot over the mantelpiece. Moving a couple of steps forward to let the light into the room, I was suddenly startled in a way that I have never been before or since.

“The face of the dead man—and the face only—became all at once illuminated by an intense white light, and shone with a ghastly distinctness out of the darkness!

“I will confess that I got a fright at the moment. My heart seemed to stop suddenly, and then, with a wild throb, commenced to beat so violently that I felt the tension in the arteries of my head.

“I advanced to the bedside, when the mystery was at once explained. The illumination was caused by the reflection of the moonlight caught by some mirror on the mantelpiece. But the effect was very strange nevertheless. The face of the dead man might have been carved in marble, had it not been for the glass-like eyes, which glistened under the partially closed eyelids.

“But, looking closer, my heart began to beat rapidly again. Was I going mad, for the eyes, in the concentrated light, looked *unlike the eyes of a dead man!*

"I sank down on a chair for a moment beside the bed, and the manuscript reverted to my mind. I got up again, and went to the mantelpiece. The object which threw the ray of light was a small convex mirror. I deflected it slightly, and the ray of light shone on the chair I had just left."

"Then I returned to the chair, and, leaning back, gazed into the light. I suppose I was unstrung, or under the influence of the strange idea that had suggested this thing; but it was as if awakening from a dream that I started up when I saw Mrs. Marston holding a lighted candle, and with a very frightened look on her face, standing a couple of yards away from me."

"'Why, doctor! are you ill?' she exclaimed."

"'Not at all,' I replied, but with a semi-hysterical gasp at the awakening. 'I almost fell asleep here in the moonlight.'"

"'The poor master used always to keep the blinds up,' the housekeeper returned casually. She still looked at me strangely. No wonder, for if my face was ever capable of conveying an impression, it must have then showed her that strange thoughts were in my mind."

"'Would you kindly leave me alone again?' I said; 'I want to make an experiment. I shall call you when I am finished.'"

"Mrs. Marston looked surprised and puzzled, but lit the gas, and left the candle as well. After wait-

ing a moment, I opened the door, and, transferring the key to the inside, locked the door. Then I looked about for some instruments which I might require, and found them there. But first I prepared for the most peculiar operation—if I may so call it—that I have ever performed.

“In the weird light of that horrible mirror I had seen the eyes of the supposed dead man were not like the lustreless eyes of a corpse; and I felt sure that my indescribable suspicion had been correct. This impression was strengthened by the strange effect that the concentrated rays of the moon had had upon myself. Carefully and long, raising the eyelids, I examined the eyes of the man before me. The irises were greatly dilated, but there was life in them, though they had looked death-like in the morning. I propped the body up in a sitting posture, and stood before it.

“Then followed the strangest time I have ever spent. With what little knowledge of the mystical art I possessed, and using all my will-power, for a half hour my hands and arms ceaselessly and wildly waved, making the passes used to demerise hypnotized subjects. At the end of that time a thrill of excitement ran through me, as I noticed a perceptible quiver in the eyelids of the man before me. Five minutes later the mouth twitched; ten minutes later the eyelids suddenly opened, and the eyes stared—vacantly, it is true—in front of them.

My arms dropped to my side ; my experiment was finished.

"Gently I replaced the doctor in a recumbent position. Then I fetched some brandy from the table, on which it had been placed that morning. I poured a few drops down his throat from time to time for another half hour, till intelligence came into his eyes ; then he sighed several times, and at last, in a weak voice, spoke :

" ' It is true, then,' he said ; ' it can be done.' "

" ' It can,' I whispered back. And then, with a faint smile of satisfaction, he sank into a quiet and natural sleep, and I watched by him till the morning.

"I have now told you the unusual part of the story ; the conventional portion you can fill in yourself—the surprise to the inmates of the house, and indeed to everybody else, the explanations, and the renown I gained at the time."

"But what did the manuscript tell you?" asked Hervey.

"It simply treated on the possibility of a man's mesmerising himself," I answered ; "but it gave me the idea that the doctor was perhaps not dead after all, though at the time it did not strike me that he was mesmerised."

"And the romance of the story?" asked one of the group of new-comers.

"Ah," said I, smiling at the remembrance, "the

occurrence made my name, and so I soon afterwards received the doctor's consent to make Mary my wife. But I think he would have given it even if success had not come to me."

"But, dash it all, he might not have been alive to give his consent had you not achieved success," said Aylworth.

But I was above logic, and so made no reply.

CHAPTER V.

THE STATUE OF NIOBE.

"THAT'S a very passable story," said Flynn, one of the recent invaders of our room, to the group. "How many of your fellows have been reminiscing?"

"We have all had our turn now; mine was the last," I replied.

"Well, if all the reminiscences were as exciting as yours," returned Flynn, "I for one am sorry that I did not devote my evening to smoking, instead of to playing billiards."

I murmured an acknowledgment to the implied compliment, but I kept unexpressed the thought that perhaps there would have been no stories to hear had Flynn and his friends decided to occupy the smoking-room earlier.

"And then the text in each case," went on Flynn, taking his pipe out of his mouth, and tracing in space imaginary outlines of words with it, "was, I presume, the one expressed by the Swan of Avon—

"'There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.'"

"That will do well enough," replied Aylworth for me, "though we did not mean to apply it in its narrowest sense."

"And still," returned Flynn, "that is the *leit motif* of most life stories, for the men who tell of their doings in the battle of life are, like warriors, prone to speak of their victories; a man who has suffered defeat either sinks out of sight, or, remaining in the world, has no story that he is willing to tell."

The shabby-genteel man laid down his newspaper, and glanced sharply from under his bushy grey eyebrows at the speaker. He was about to make an observation, but, evidently thinking better of it, resumed his reading with an expression of contempt on his face.

"The only thing I would say," went on Flynn, "is that most of us have not one, but many turning-points in our careers. And I, like the rest of you, can certainly recollect an important one that leads to others more important. But who among us Bohemians—artists or litterateurs—is there who has not achieved his share of prosperity by some merely fortuitous stroke of luck?"

"That," said Aylworth, "we may take as an admission that you have a story to tell; and, as I am sure that a sculptor must, of all men, have something in this line worth hearing, we shall expect a romantic story from you."

We all joined in pressing for the story ; and Flynn, evidently nothing loth, commenced.

“ Well, I have brought this upon myself, so that I suppose I must accede to your request. My story has to deal with a work of mine which brought me prosperity, but in a most peculiar and unusual way.

“ It is a little over twenty-five years ago, then, when one morning my chum and I sat gloomily holding a council of war in the studio we jointly occupied. Things had come to a bad pass with us—very bad, indeed—and, with the depleted state of our finances, we were seriously discussing the advisableness of turning from our unprofitable Bohemian calling, if at all possible, to something more lucrative, now that the autumn had come upon us ; for we were utterly ‘ dead broke,’ and the prospect held out by the coming winter months was something appalling. But you know that when a man has lived in the spirit of freedom for any length of time, it is not an easy thing, indeed often it is not a possible thing, for him to give up his independence even to earn his bread ; and then, again, what is such a one to turn his hand to ? So we sat fruitlessly discussing the matter, and in the manner of those in such straits, were more ready to deplore our unhappy circumstances than to devise any way to alter them.

"But our circumstances differed somewhat. My companion had, from being merely *dilettante*, only been a year trying to win fame with his brush, and had instead only succeeded in earning a bare subsistence: but then he had wealthy relatives, and now that he was disillusioned with Bohemian life, he could doubtless induce them to aid him in getting into some settled calling. This thought was a relief to me, for it was I who had induced him to join me in the metropolis. For certain reasons, by the way, I need not mention his name in this story.

"It was really, then, my case that was under discussion, though my chum did not wish to desert me in my time of tribulation. And I, who had been brought up to art from my youth, had not done much better than he financially, and for me, no matter how we turned over the subject, there seemed to be no prospect but the old groove, with its hopeless struggles.

"And my chum, seeing that all talking was hopeless, threw down his pipe, and, muttering something about seeing if breakfast was ready, left the room.

"I sat there alone smoking and thinking disconsolately. It was a wet morning, and the rain splattered softly on the window in the roof above, with a monotonous sound that made me feel doubly gloomy. I looked round the studio at

the chaotic disorder of studies and paintings in all stages of completion, and painting materials scattered all about the place in disorder. I looked at the unfinished picture on my chum's easel, and the hurriedly-completed daub of a pot-boiler on mine, at the lay figure that, in the impoverished state of our finances, had so often to take the place of a model; at the statuettes in clay, and the plaster casts that were about everywhere; and one and all called up varied recollections of the past. How sorry I would be to leave it all, vain as my hopes and bitter as my struggles had been! If—if I could only have followed my taste, and have done the work that came easiest to my hands, perhaps things would have turned out differently. I might have known that at painting I could have come to nothing but bad mediocrity, which spells failure for a man who has to earn his bread by it.

“My chum, mediocre though he was, was my superior in many ways with the brush. He had, for one thing, a good instinct for colour. That was just what I had always lacked, and I should never have tried to win my way with the brush. Every master in whose *atelier* I had studied had told me this truth, and if circumstances had favoured me, I would have gone in for the higher art of sculpture, at which I had done some promising studies. For if a true eye for colour had

been denied me, nature had bestowed on me—so I had, when a student, been told—an accurate perception of form.

“With the clay, with the marble—ah, what could I not have achieved! But necessity had made a painter of me, and, as ill-luck would have it, a poor one.

“The door was flung open, and my chum suddenly dashed in, suddenly interrupting my unhappy train of thoughts. He looked highly excited, and held an open letter in his hand.”

“Ah, the inevitable legacy,” said Aylworth softly.

“No, not quite that,” returned Flynn, in a nettled tone. “But if that day had not been an eventful one, God knows how different my lot would have turned out.

“Well, my chum stopped before me, waved the letter wildly over his head, and gave a triumphant shout.

“‘Hurrah!’ he cried, ‘we can make another shot at fame. But,’ he added, quieting down suddenly, ‘I must explain matters. You heard me speak of my wealthy relative—my Uncle John? Yes. Well, the other day I wrote him a letter in which I plainly explained my circumstances—how, through adverse luck, and in spite of the hardest of work, I now find myself in unfortunate pecuniary difficulties. I have just received a letter from the

old buffer, in which he tells me that I have been industrious and steady, and all that kind of thing, and that we cannot all command success in this uncertain world; and in it he encloses a cheque for one hundred pounds, which I am to use in making a last great effort, and if I then fail he will do something for me. Doesn't it seem too good to be real?'

"'It's well to be you!' I said, with as little envy in my voice as I could help.

"'Now, look here, old man,' said my chum, laying his hand affectionately on my shoulder, 'this is to be *your* opportunity. You know perfectly well—you needn't take the trouble to deny it—that I shall never make a success as a painter. All the same, I shall use up this money—on you. No! do not interrupt. I shall stay with you and share this money till it is spent, and while it lasts I want you to devote your time altogether to sculpture—to the clay. This is the opportunity for you to take to the work you love. Use the talents you displayed when you were studying sculpture; model a statue that you can get exhibited, and that will give you your greatest chance of making a name. Put your soul into the work, man, and, by heaven, you will live to thank me for my advice!'

"I was bewildered, but my chum dragged me down to the room beneath our studio, where we

both slept and took our meals, as we could not afford greater accommodation. At breakfast, and during most of that day, we argued the matter out, he persuading in almost every form of logic, and I objecting to take advantage of his generosity. But at last he overruled me, and I submitted to his wishes.

“And then, once I did acquiesce, the idea burned in my brain like a fever. I caught all his enthusiasm, and the hopes that had so long slumbered that they seemed to have died, revived in all their force. I seemed to live again with the old hopes, and the old dreams of fame that are never really absent from an artist’s heart tortured me once more.

“We planned vaguely, wildly, for some days, and then our ideas took coherent shape. The cheque was changed, a dutiful letter of gratitude written by my chum, who at the end of that week pawned his hurriedly scraped-off daub, as usual, and then we settled down to work.

“I would make a statue of Niobe; I, who had tasted so much sorrow and disappointment, felt that in the likeness of that grief-petrified woman of sorrows, I would find a subject to which I could do most justice.

“My chum showed the greatest activity in the preparation for the work. The clay was got in, and we busied ourselves for some time with the

F

preliminaries. The work would have to be undertaken as soon as possible, as progress would be slow, for the thing was to try and get it accepted for the spring exhibition at the Academy.

"But first I had to see how much of my old skill had survived. For some weeks I spent my days from morning till night in making studies in clay for the contemplated work; and then the more I worked the more confidence I got, for it was with inward joy and hope that I felt and saw that if ever I could do anything worth doing, it would be in sculpture and not in painting.

"Then I settled down to the design of my statue. I sketched it out many times before it suited my fancy, and then I set up as much of the framework—that mysterious sub-structure of wood and piping and wire of which you fellows know nothing—and was ready for the model.

"But the model—heavens! what trouble I had to find that model. There is misery enough and to spare to choose from in this great city, and an artist sees plenty of it, I can assure you; but I thought that I would never come across the model I wanted. I know that I could have done my work as it is sometimes done—with the face of one person, the body of another, and the limbs of yet another; but I wanted one model whose pose would be the pose I wanted, and whose face would be the face of the Niobe of my imagination.

"And when long searching and many trials of models had proved fruitless, the model of my Niobe came to me in that unexpected way that things come in this world of accidents. One evening when my chum and I happened to be attending an informal symposium of a Bohemian club to which I belonged, I chanced to mention this matter of a model to a young doctor whom a love of gaiety, and such a connection with art as commissions for anatomical work to certain members of the club, had gained admittance into the select circle. It was not with much anticipation of success that I thanked him when he told me hurriedly that he would send me the wife of a poor patient of his; she would be glad to sit for the statue, and would just suit my purpose, he imagined.

"It was on the late afternoon of the next day, when my chum and I were just finishing up work by the unsatisfactory light of a very clouded sky, that the landlady knocked at the studio door and announced that a person was waiting below to see me. I hastened down stairs, and in the dim light of the hall could just distinguish the heavily cloaked form of a woman. In a gentle and timid voice she mentioned my name, and when I assured her I was the person she required, she said that she had called to see if she would suit for some sittings for the statue I was engaged upon. I at once asked her to follow me up to the studio.

"We had worked in the studio till the colour had gone out of things, but the dim light that remained was sufficient to show me that my visitant was very different from any model that had as yet offered herself. I asked her to be seated, and then lit a lamp that was suspended in a way to give the best light for night work."

Flynn paused a moment, possibly for effect, and we waited while he selected another cigar out of his case.

"She had not accepted my invitation to be seated, and, when I turned towards her, she stood there before us in the lamplight. Throwing back her cloak, and, at my request, taking off her hat, she revealed a majestic form and a face that at once riveted my artistic instincts. She was very beautiful—so beautiful, indeed, that I, who was used to varied degrees of beauty in models, was for a moment almost startled at the woman who stood before me. Her features were perfect, with that classical balance of perfection that an artist imagines more frequently than he sees. But her face, perfect as it was, was that of a beautiful woman who had seen sorrow; though her beauty was of that rare kind that only disease or death can destroy, and that sorrow but accentuates and makes more striking. Her expression was calm, but there lurked in her eyes and in her mouth a look of pride that was half humiliation. She was, undoubt-

edly, no ordinary model, but a lady, who had thus come to me."

"Ah!" murmured Aylworth, "this is intensely romantic. The husband duly died, of course?"

Flynn did not notice the remark, but continued—

"Once more I asked her to be seated, but, drawing her cloak around her again, she remained standing as before. And then, in a low, sweet voice, she said she had been sent by my friend the doctor, and that she had to hasten back to her sick husband. We spoke a moment about terms, and what she asked were so high as to very greatly surprise me; she would give a few sittings for a certain sum, and, although she said it gently, there was indomitable decision in her voice when she quietly declared that she wanted that sum of money, and would not consent to sit for less. And in spite of the fact that this would make a serious demand on our finances, I could not but consent.

"I told her that I would want her to sit for a draped statue of Niobe.

"‘For Niobe,’ she said, flushing, and a strange, wild expression coming into her face. ‘For Niobe—whose sorrows were so great that the pitying gods turned her to stone—yes, perhaps I will suit you!’ And I felt in my soul that she could depict sorrow from its remembrance.

"Then I escorted her downstairs, and she left, and I returned to my chum. I found him sitting on a

stool in an attitude of bewilderment, and whistling softly to himself.

“‘Have the gods themselves sent us a model from across the Styx?’ he asked. ‘If you do not make a good work of art now, you cannot count on such a chance again. Beautiful, and evidently a lady. I wonder what is her history.’

“A great deal of time had been wasted in searching for a model, and the winter was now pretty far advanced, so that it was necessary for me to work hard if I wished to have a chance of competing at the Spring Exhibition of the Academy. The sittings for the posture of the figure therefore were at once commenced, and a daughter of the landlady attended my model when she sat for me.

“I wanted to pose her somewhat in the attitude of the figure from the celebrated group of ‘Niobe,’ of unknown origin, with the head thrown back in an abandonment of grief. On the very first day, however, in an interval of the sitting, I suddenly caught her looking at some object held in one of her hands. It was, I saw, a locket, and the expression of extraordinary agony she wore when gazing at it, and the unconscious grief of her attitude, inspired me to pose her as she then sat. So I posed her thus during all the sittings, and when I was taking the face her expression of unutterable woe was inspired by that locket, the

contents of which I never knew, which she kept concealed in her hand.

“This necessitated some rebuilding of the work I had already done, and, added to that, taking proportions was a task that occupied time. But I worked as I had never worked before, and the mass of plastic clay seemed to grow into a thing of life in my hands. And then in time I came to the face, and, with the greatest care and most delicate touch, I moulded into it all the grief and all the beauty of the face of the woman before me. My chum had painted while I worked at the statue; but as my work neared completion, he daily showed more and more interest in it, and ended by neglecting his easel entirely to wait upon me. His enthusiasm in my task more than equalled my own, and it was not long before most of our artist acquaintances heard from him of the statue I was making. Soon I found my work a topic of interest in our Bohemian club; but, in spite of all requests, I would not permit anyone to view it until it was completed.

“And at last that day came, and the work was done. My model came and sat while I gave the statue the last touch, and then her sittings were over, and she left me as unknown as she had come to me. For she had never—would you believe it?—told me even her name. As for her history, I had not the remotest idea of it, although I had

once or twice felt some curiosity on the subject. But the sittings had been silent ones, and I, absorbed in my work, had not thought twice about her name, and had never required to ask her for it. So when I made the final payment, and had closed the door upon her, I never again expected to see her face.

"And now the statue was completed in the clay, and I awoke to the fact that I had made a work of art beyond all my hopes. My chum, generous in his praises, prophesied all kinds of good fortune through the work—fame at the exhibition, and a subsequent future as a recognised and successful sculptor for me. He brought his friends in, and they viewed the statue, and, like him, were enthusiastic in their praise of my work. The fame of my statue spread, till it seemed that what appeared to me but a dream was true, and that I had done a work that would indeed bring me recognition.

"One day a couple of our artist friends obtained my permission to bring a celebrated art connoisseur, whom I shall call Lord X, to view my work. This nobleman was a great patron of art—or, rather, had been, for of late years some private troubles had caused him to lead a somewhat secluded life. But having heard of my statue, he was to come to see it after the plaster cast had been made.

"The casting—that was a time of agony for me! After all my labour, much still depended upon the success of this operation. I need not tell you of all the mental torture I suffered when the two rascally Italians, who littered the studio, and quarrelled incessantly together during the days of their task, were engaged at it; but it was like awakening from a bad dream when, with a feeling of relief and thankfulness, I found that it had been got through all right, and that my statue was more beautiful in white plaster than the grey clay model had been.

"The day of the visit of Lord X arrived. The studio had been cleaned up, and all our best pictures hung about to the best advantage, for this was to be a formal reception on a small scale.

"I need not only say that this was a very happy function for both of us. Of course I tried my best to believe the most of the praise that was lavished on my work was given by my friend in a spirit of kindness and *bon camaraderie*; nevertheless, I could not help feeling proud and gratified as I had never in my life been before. The only thing that struck a discord was that when Lord X, who came late, examined the statue, he was seized with a fainting fit; but he was an elderly man, and evidently not very robust, so that this occurrence did not at the time cause me more than a feeling of passing uncomfortableness.

"My chum and I brought him down to our room, and soon revived him with stimulants, and he stayed there till all the guests had gone away, and then remained some time chatting with us. When I was showing him to the door he casually asked for the name of my model, though I was surprised that his voice trembled when he asked the question. All the information I could give him was to supply him with her address, which I happened to know; but this seemed to satisfy him, and he drove away.

"Some days later I was sitting alone in my room in the evening, when, to my great astonishment, Lord X was announced. I was anything but pleased at the visit, as I was quite unprepared to receive him. However, I made the best of it, and tried my utmost not to appear disconcerted when he came into the shabby little room. My chum was spending the evening out, and I was passing the time smoking alone.

"‘I am so sorry to disturb you, Mr. Flynn,’ said my visitor, ‘but I called to see you on a matter of some importance. Can I speak with you alone?’

"I told him that my friend had gone out for the evening, and he looked pleased at the news. I found it difficult to believe that he was the same man who had visited me a few days previously; he now looked quite hale, and in excellent spirits.

“‘Well, I want to see that statue of yours again, if you can show it me, Mr. Flynn,’ he said. ‘Could you not take me up to your studio now?’

“‘Certainly, Lord X, with the greatest of pleasure,’ I replied, and I took my lamp from off the table, and, with some curiosity in my mind as to what his visit meant, led the way to the studio.

“I opened the door, and we entered the silent room, which was chilly with the air of a cold February evening. The statue was on a daïs in the centre of the room, and looked ghost-like in the shrouding with which it was protected from the dust. I drew off the cloths, and put the lamp in a good position for viewing my work.

“My visitor stood looking at the statue for some moments without speaking. I stood by, and wondered what his thoughts were, and how it was that he could view it by day and faint, and now look upon it with the pleasure which his face expressed.

“‘Can you sell this statue?’ he said, at last, turning to me.

“‘Oh, that is quite impossible,’ I said. ‘I have just to-day been seeing about getting it exhibited. Afterwards I may execute it in marble—and then——’

“‘The cast will do me,’ my visitor interrupted hastily. ‘I want this as it is, and I want it now,’

It is beautiful—very beautiful.’ And then he made me a very handsome offer for it if he could have it taken to his place.

“I was irresolute, but only for a moment—only when I thought of my poverty, and the money tempted. But my artist’s dreams came back to me. I would try for fame first, and afterwards win money, if it was to be. So I answered him, and gratefully but resolutely I refused.

“He was evidently disappointed; but a determined look sprang into his face. He increased his offer until I wavered, for the temptation was very great. At last I cried almost in agony,—

“‘Do not tempt me! This work means more than money to me. If it gets noticed I shall have a secure future before me. I want to exhibit it.’

“‘But I did not say anything about prohibiting you to exhibit it. After you sell it to me you may do so—if you then think well of it.’

“‘But you said you wanted to bring it to your place, Lord X.?’ I asked, in surprise.

“‘Here is the cheque,’ he answered, and, going over to the lamp, he took some cheques out of his pocket-book, and handed me one. He had evidently filled up several to be prepared for whatever I would accept, and this was for the amount of his last offer. It was comparative wealth to me, and my hand trembled as I ex-

amined the precious paper. I stood up and put it in my pocket. I had succumbed to the temptation.

"And then I looked at him. He was weighing in his hand a slab of marble which had lain on the floor near the door. From him I looked at the beautiful face of my Niobe, and to my imagination her sorrow was for me and for my yielding to temptation to sell her thus. In remorse I put my hand in my pocket, to pull out the cheque and cast it at the tempter's feet with a refusal, when suddenly my visitor's arm went up, I saw the marble slab upraised, and then, with a crash, the face of my beautiful Niobe was shattered to fragments.

"With a shriek I rushed forward, but it seemed that my soul left me in the agony of the moment, for I remember no more then.

"When I regained consciousness I was in bed, and my chum sat on a chair by my side. I was too weak to speak much then, or for some days afterwards, but later on I learned that I had been through some kind of high fever. Lord X, it seemed, had made inquiries about me every day, and had been most anxious about my state; but I shuddered at the very name of the man, and I never wished to see him again.

"When I was well again, however, I received a very kindly-worded letter from him, expressing

the greatest contrition for his act, and saying that he would send his carriage for me on a certain evening, when he could afford me an explanation at his house. My chum persuaded me to go, and I did.

"It was with no very happy feelings that I found myself in his hall, and I felt as if I was touching the hand of an enemy when his hand clasped mine; but he took me by the arm and led me into a brightly-lighted room. And there, to my utter astonishment, I was confronted by my model—whom he introduced as his daughter—and a delicate-looking gentleman, her husband.

"My daughter, Mr. Flynn, was wayward like many another girl, and when I had other plans for her, some few years ago, eloped with the man of her choice. But she was my daughter, and so had a proud heart, and she hid herself from me all those years till you discovered her to me, and now she has come back to take her rightful place in society. I could not explain this to you, and I could not have her likeness exhibited; you did it so marvellously that she would have been recognised. Can you forgive me now?"

"And I shook hands with him, and forgave him."

"Did you ever again execute a statue of Niobe?" I asked.

"No," replied Flynn sadly; "but, as fate would

have it, I exhibited her rival in 'Latona Triumphant' in the next year's Academy exhibition, and that, with Lord X's introductions, brought me into notice. But it is to the ill-fated Niobe that I owe everything."

CHAPTER VI.

A PIPE OF HASHISH.

"By Jove! it's getting late, and I, for one, must be moving," said I, looking at my watch; and there-upon some of us stood up, and there was a general movement.

"Stay, gentlemen, stay!" said the shabby-gentleel man from his seat near the fireplace.

At this unexpected interruption we stood still, and looked at him. He had thrown down his newspaper, and was facing us with an expression of excitement on his lined countenance. His eyes glistened brightly from under his shaggy grey eyebrows, and the hand which he held uplifted towards us trembled excessively.

"Do not go yet—not quite yet," he said. "You have stayed so late that you can stay a little later without inconvenience. I think I may have something of interest to tell you."

The man's manner was so imploring, and his excitement evidently so intense, that without exception we resumed our seats, and waited with curiosity for what he had to tell us.

"From what I have heard," he said, "I think that you had better hear my tale; for, as I believe, the stories I heard were but on the same themes as the previous ones which I did not hear. You had to tell of success, of money and honour and fame. Some of you are middle-aged, most of you are young, but there is not one among you who is less than twenty years my junior. And still you talk of success!"

"I hardly see," said Aylworth coldly, "how that affects the truth of whatever little stories of success we have had to tell."

"Oh, do you not?" replied the shabby-gentle man with some scorn. "Well, it does in this much," he went on more calmly, "that you are all too young to speak of either success or failure. Who can tell what may happen at the eleventh hour? A few of the possibilities of success, and nearly all the possibilities of failure, remain with us as long as life lasts. Two or three qualities may help us on to success, and comparatively few of us possess them; there are a hundred circumstances in the lot of human life which conduce to failure. Will all of you who have achieved success always be the pets of fortune?"

He paused, but nobody answered his question, because I think that the hour being late no one was anxious to start an argument.

"And then," went on the speaker, "if we do

G

not reverse our luck by our own acts, there are others always anxious to bring about our humiliation or destruction. For success, gentlemen, however well earned, seldom fails to procure us enemies."

"And you would tell us a story about a man and his enemy," said Aylworth.

The shabby-genteel man started and looked keenly at the speaker, as if the latter had said an occult thing. He passed his hand several times across his forehead, tremulously pushing the grey hair from his brow.

"Yes, yes," he answered hurriedly, "that is what I asked you to stay for. I think you young men—you are all young to me—should learn how a man may, through no fault of his own, get the success of a lifetime reversed. It would be a lesson to you to wait until you are drawing your last breath before declaring that your life has been a success——"

"Or a failure," I said.

"I would tell you the story of—of a friend of mine, whose name was—was—no matter about his name then."

"You will simplify matters," said Aylworth quietly, "by telling your story in the first person. None of us will abuse your confidence."

The shabby-genteel man again darted a startle

and suspicious glance at the speaker, and then he laughed a short, nervous laugh.

"Very well, my dear sir, very well," he said, "it will come easier to me to do so.

"This story mainly concerns two events in my life's history. I need not, therefore, go into details otherwise about my career, which was in many respects a remarkable and eventful one. You, who now see me an old man, would perhaps give scant credence to the many tales of adventure I could tell you. Suffice it to say, then, that I was a mineralogist by profession, and, as a mining expert, my calling brought me into some of the wildest parts of the world, and among the strangest companions. I had left England when I was little over twenty years of age, and I was nearly ten years knocking about South and Central America before I returned to my native land. Perhaps, indeed, I would never have returned but for a certain circumstance; for a roving life in those parts unfits a man for the quiet life of these latitudes, and I was still young enough at thirty for the fever of unrest to burn fiercely in my heart.

"And the reason why I came back was supplied by a friend of mine. He was the only intimate friend I had ever—or, indeed, have ever—made in my life. I first met him in the town of Chihuahua, in the silver region of Mexico. We occupied

positions in the same mine there, and when the wandering spirit took possession of me we made our ventures together. And so for six years we two shared our luck, good and bad. And then one day he heard some news from friends in England, and when he declared that he must return to the old country, if only for a short stay, I could not endure the thought of being separated from him, so I consented to accompany him."

"Was he an interesting man? Had he a history?" asked Aylworth, somewhat impatiently.

"My dear sir," said the shabby-genteel man, "you must let an old man tell his story in his own way. My friend's name was Alexander; that, and the fact that he had travelled for many years in the East before I met him, was really all I knew of him. I could certainly give you a description of his physical characteristics, but how could that interest you? Perhaps it would be more to the point if I could give you an insight into his character; but I could not do that. His was a strong character, a strange wild character, with those complications of good and evil in its nature that, I suppose, supplied its attractiveness. This much is all I have to say of my friend himself.

"We started for Europe, and one day in the early summer found ourselves in London. But neither

of us felt at his ease in the great city. The company of civilised men had grown strange to us; so we stayed in the metropolis only long enough to procure a complete outfit. Then we went down to Surrey, where Alexander's friends lived, for he had extended their invitation to me, who, being without relations, would not otherwise have known where to turn to.

"I expected that my friend was going to visit relations—remember, I knew nothing of his life; but it was not so, for these people were merely friends. Our host was an elderly gentleman, who, my friend told me, was a great authority on, and transacted business in, precious stones; and his wife and young daughter were very charming indeed. We were most hospitably received by the family, who had, I believe, known my friend and his people. There happened to be several other visitors staying in the house, and we two, having been travellers in strange lands, were made much of, and lionised to our hearts' content."

The old man paused in his narrative, and seemed buried in thought for a couple of minutes; then he proceeded more nervously and hesitantly than before—

"Gentlemen, this visit marked the epoch in my life from which all its great happiness and unhappiness sprang.

"I do not know how it quite began, but it was

fate, and no fault of ours. We two stayed on at the pressing invitation of our host and his family. Other guests came and went, but we stayed into the autumn. We had become almost members of the family—almost as sons to our host and hostess, and brothers to their daughter. But one day it came to us plainly that we were not brothers to Emily, but something else; and then between us two friends, who had stuck to one another through years of rough life, there came a cloud. For we awoke to the fact that we were in love with Emily, and that each had a rival in the other.

“My companion, with his strong nature, had been a good friend to me, but I knew that he could also be a fierce enemy. God knows, if I could have helped it I would never have gained his enmity, and I would, had it been in my power, have left him the prize he coveted. But I could not do this; it was not in my power, for I was deeply in love with Emily, and I could no more tear myself away from her than he could. All the more was this so because I saw by a hundred little tokens that she preferred me to him. Who that knows anything of human nature would say that I, knowing this, could have left her then?

“But one day—one miserable day—after turning the matter well over in my troubled mind, I determined to run up to London for the winter, and sacrifice my suit in favour of my friend. As

worldly means went, he had fared better than I in the battle of life ; but the income that either of us had acquired was not much at best. I could let my friend have his chance of winning Emily, and, if he failed, I could then with a clear conscience declare my love.

“That would have been a prudent determination had I carried it out. But fate had willed otherwise. That very evening I met Emily alone, and, in awkwardly explaining my intention of leaving, at the sight of her emotion I was carried away, and—well, all my fortitude went for naught. The interview ended by our plighting our troth to one another. There was no necessity for concealment, so the next day everyone in the house was in possession of the fact that Emily and I were engaged, and the matter was ratified by her parents’ consent.

“It was at dinner that evening that my friend was made aware of the fact. He said nothing at the time, and showed no particular emotion, and I hoped that, after all, he would take the matter in a fair spirit. But I was greatly mistaken. Later on in the evening he invited me out of doors to smoke a cigar, and then, when we had got into a secluded part of the grounds, well away from the house, he suddenly turned on me, and bitterly cursed me for taking Emily from him. All that I could say was in vain, and I shall never

forget those few minutes. It was dark, and I could not see his face, but he raved like a madman, and heaped the bitterest invectives on me, and left me with a passionate vow of lifelong vengeance ringing in my ear.

"I hoped in my heart that, his mad fit having passed, he would come to see the ridiculousness of his anger and the injustice of his threats. I thought that the remembrance of the past years' claims on one another's friendship would overcome all bitterness. But we never really know one another in this world, and I had unwittingly aroused fierce passions of whose existence I had been ignorant. The next morning my friend had vanished, leaving behind him a short letter of apology to his host.

"I may here say that, extraordinary as it may seem, that was the last I ever saw of my friend as I knew him. The next year, 1858, the Indian Mutiny broke out, and, when news of the disaffection of the native army in Oude reached this country, he sent a letter to my host—as I may still call him—saying he was going to the East.

"And that New Year saw me married to Emily. But before that happy event took place her father had taken me into a kind of partnership with him, for I, being a mineralogist, was a useful partner in his business of dealing in precious stones.

"And so time went on, and my life was one

of the greatest happiness. In Emily I had found an ideal wife, and in me I trust she found a true and sincere husband. I lived with my parents-in-law, but my business required my frequent presence in London, while occasionally I had to visit the Continent, going most frequently to Amsterdam for business purposes.

"Time, gentlemen, never waits on happiness or unhappiness, but perhaps when one's life is a happy one it goes more swiftly than otherwise. The bright years of my life came and went, bringing, it is true, their little sorrows in the course of nature. My dear wife and I had been blessed with two children—a boy and a girl—who were a great joy to both of us. They grew up under the tender care of a good mother. But ten years after our marriage Emily lost her father, who had been such a good friend to me, and soon afterwards her mother followed him to the grave. Such are the inevitable sorrows that life brings.

"In wordly matters I prospered. Quietly and assiduously I attended to the business which, on the death of my father-in-law, had entirely devolved upon me; and gradually, as the years went by, the profits from my precious exchanges increased till I found myself a fairly wealthy man.

"More changes came. My boy went through college, embraced his chosen calling—medicine, and was on the way to prosperity; my girl married very

happily, and was well settled; but our children had not long left us when my dear wife died. It was the hardest blow of my life, that parting after so much happiness.

“Left alone in life, the old incentive to work was gone, and I resolved to retire from business, and spend my declining years in ease. I had made more money than I had ever hoped to, but then I had always spent freely, and settling my children in life had cost money. Nevertheless, the amount which I now found to my credit was a large one, and I could have invested it in some ordinary way, were it not for a peculiar circumstance.

“It was a temptation that came in my way thus. Some diamond merchants with whom I had had dealings acquired a very fine purchase of stones. Negotiations about these diamonds had been going on between the firm and the Court of Constantinople—no less a person than his Imperial Majesty there desired to purchase them. But for some reason of convenience, this firm did not desire to sell direct, and when the negotiations were favourably completed, and it only remained to bring the stones to Constantinople—they had been inspected and valued here for the intending august purchaser—the firm were anxious to hand them over to another party who would, on his own account, complete the transaction. All this, mind you, was a perfectly private affair, and it was quite confidenti-

ally that I was approached on the matter. I had given up my business, and had my own leisure now. Would I care to purchase the stones? I was getting the first offer. Such were the representations made to me.

"I was not very keen about the matter until I inspected the gems. When I saw them I was seized with an intense desire to possess them. They were a beautiful lot of unset diamonds, finely cut, and polished by a famous Dutch firm. There were ten stones in all, but they included some remarkable gems of the first water—rose diamonds, colourless stones, and three or four of those tinted diamonds which are so valuable when of perfect lustre. And all these stones were perfect of their kind; indeed, I had never seen such a fine set of its kind together.

"Gentlemen, I did not think that I was doing a very mad thing when I purchased the stones, although they cost me all my capital but a couple of hundred pounds. It was, on the face of it, a safe deal, and I was to make a nice little profit on this my last transaction; besides, the trip in the fine weather—it was in the summer—would be of benefit to my health, and help to divert my mind from my lonely position.

"I must not linger here, for I have much more to tell before I finish; therefore I cannot detail to you how I enjoyed that wonderful journey down

the Mediterranean in the glorious summer, or the many new sights I saw on my voyage—I took the sea journey for health's sake—to Constantinople. I had many changes of boats, and visited many ports, before I passed through the magical Grecian archipelago, made the passage of the Dardanelles, and arrived at my destination.

“Nor can I dwell upon my impression of that strange and beautifully-situated city, which has seen so much history and so many varied fortunes since the time of Constantine the Great. I will just say that I was fascinated by the strangeness of everything about me, and that I lost a considerable time in sight-seeing in that wonderful city, which, with the exception of a few modern streets, with its picturesque but frail houses, and numberless minarets, is different from anything that Western eyes are used to. Under the escort of a French guide I went through its maze of dirty and ill-paved streets, which were made picturesque by the variety of nationalities represented there, drawn from all the ports of the world, and the great adjacent countries. Within a week I had thoroughly inspected the city, from the great Seraglio on the east to the wonderful Mosque of St. Sophia; and then, satiated with sight-seeing, I turned my attention to the business upon which I had come.

“But, although I was furnished with all neces-

sary credentials, and had reckoned upon doing my business expeditiously once I set about it, as all details had been arranged, I found myself faced by many unexpected and vexatious delays. However, it could not be helped, and, as I was fairly comfortably lodged, and my mission was a profound secret to all but those immediately concerned, I had no apprehensions for myself or my valuable possessions. So I passed my time revisiting the various places of interest.

“One day, when paying a visit to the Mosque of St. Sophia, my attention was attracted to a picturesque Mohammedan dervish who stood in the porch of the sacred edifice—a venerable-looking man, with his long grey beard and piercingly dark eyes. As I was passing him in the porch he gave me a searching look which sent a peculiar and unaccountable thrill through me. I took off my shoes and passed into the great Mosque. There, strangely enough, I came across some English tourists, whom I joined, and when I parted from them outside the Mosque we exchanged addresses. I remember inwardly wondering if the dervish, who was near, had often heard the sound of our strange tongue before.

“I was pleased one day when I was informed from the palace that everything was all right, and that I was commanded to bring the diamonds

there on the morrow. I felt relieved, for I had begun to fear that a serious delay might occur.

"I was sitting, after my evening meal, in my room in the French hotel where I was stopping, on the day when the news arrived. It had been extremely hot all day, and I had done a good deal of walking; so I was glad to recline on a seat at the open window, and watch the light as it faded out of the sky, and made a golden background to the dark outlines of irregular roofs and slender minarets. I was thinking, with a feeling of regret, that I would soon be returning to the prosaic Western world, when there came a knock at the door, and a waiter entered.

"‘A Mohammedan dervish has called, and particularly wishes to have an interview with monsieur.’

"I was greatly astonished, and asked what the dervish wanted.

"The waiter did not know, but he said the dervish was a man known and highly respected in the city, and that he said he had introductory letters. So I told the man to send my strange visitor up.

"With considerable curiosity in my mind, I closed the window, and waited the advent of my visitor. In a couple of minutes the waiter, carrying a small lamp, showed him into the room, and, retiring, left him facing me.

"I took a couple of steps towards him, when he prostrated himself on the floor before me. Totally ignorant of Eastern customs and etiquette, I could only wait until he rose again and stood before me. Then I was surprised to notice at the first glance that he was the dervish I had seen in the porch of the Mosque. He was dressed in a flowing garb of spotless white, with a white turban, in which, however, was intermingled the sacred Mohammedan green.

"He fixed his piercing eyes upon me, and addressed me in some unknown language, which, I imagined from its softness, was Arabic; then he changed to what I knew, from a word or two, was Turkish. I replied, in French, that I did not understand any Oriental language. Thereupon my visitor addressed me in the same language, and presented three letters to me.

"I looked at them. One was a document in Turkish, which, of course, I was unable to read. The others were in French, from the British and French Consuls, introducing my visitor in very eulogistic terms. The letter from the former official stated that my visitor, who was a man of great sanctity and learning among the Mohammedans, would be of great assistance in advising me about the jewels which I was disposing of to his Imperial Majesty. I read and re-read the letters, which bore all the evidence of genuineness,

in surprise; and then I invited my visitor to be seated on an ottoman. He seated himself in the Eastern manner, and I did likewise on an ottoman near him.

"Then in a low, gentle voice, he commenced the conversation. He told me how he was a wandering dervish, and had travelled all over the East, and had, among other places, visited the famous Indian diamond region of Golconda, and had seen many of the most famous Oriental diamonds. What he had to tell me was most interesting, and I found myself throwing off my reserve as I listened to the even flow of his low musical voice. After some time I conversed with some confidence, and then I offered to show him my diamonds.

"I went to my bedroom for the diamonds. I had them safely locked up, but, as I have said before, since my mission was unknown, I did not take any very elaborate precautions with them. Soon I returned with the case, and disclosed the glittering gems to the admiring eyes of my visitor, who was lavish in his praise of the stones, which he examined separately by the lamp-light. That was not a light by which to examine them, but even by it they looked magnificent, and my visitor, making a guess at their value in francs, considerably outbid the 1,250,000 francs I had given for them.

"I left the case on the table, before my eyes, and we both resumed our former positions, and chatted as before. Our talk at first was all of the diamonds and their destination, of which I now spoke unreservedly; and he gave me many hints which would be of much use to me in my interview on the morrow. This confidential conversation would, I thought, end the interview; but from the subject of the diamonds he changed to other and various topics. His voice, as I have said, was pleasing and low, and he was evidently a man of very superior intellect and varied information. I grew silent listening to him, and I sat mutely watching him while he talked on and on, wondering, in my heart, at the strangeness of the situation. His white garb made him look ethereal in the dim lamp-light, but the dark eyes, whose expression belied the calm face, fascinated me strangely, and inspired in me a feeling that I could not analyse. I found myself getting uncomfortable under their scrutiny after a time, and I rose and rang for coffee, as my visitor showed no signs of departing.

"And now, gentlemen, I come to a most peculiar part of my story. If you are inclined to ask questions, do not do so, for the strange thing I have to tell I could never, and can never explain or justify. I shall merely say that this saintly man awed me physically and mentally. I felt that I was entertaining a superior, and that, combined with the fact that I was quite ignorant of Eastern customs, and reluctant

H

to show my ignorance, is the only explanation I can give of what followed.

"The coffee was brought—strong, bitter coffee, served without milk or sugar, in the Turkish custom. I offered my visitor a cigarette, and took one myself. But we had not been long smoking before my visitor threw aside his cigarette, and, bending towards me, and fixing his dark eyes on me, said—

"‘Thou wilt, O stranger, be leaving this land ere many more hours have flown, but it were wrong to do so before smoking the wonderful hashish which gives the East, the cradle of all thought, its dreams.’

"He thereupon took from the folds of his garment two strange-looking pipes, the like of which I had never before seen, and a small round box of what I imagined was gold. I watched him, as, from the box, he slowly and carefully filled the pipes with some dark substance. Then he closed the box, again secreted it, and handed one of the pipes to me.

"I held the slender pipe in my hand, and looked at it with considerable curiosity. It was made of some black material, and was shaped somewhat like an opium pipe, with a long stem and a small bowl, and was very richly mounted in gold. Of the nature of the substance with which it was charged I knew nothing. I had never heard of hashish, and the dervish's words filled me with suspicion. So I held the pipe in my hand, and hesitated to light.

"I then looked at the dervish. Calmly and

serenely, without noticing my hesitation, he lit his pipe, and then turned his look on me. I felt ashamed at my suspicions, which vanished under his calm but keen scrutiny. I put a light to my pipe, just as he murmured softly—

“‘Smoke, O stranger! and as thou smokest I will tell thee some strange tales of Allah’s chosen ones.’

“I inhaled a few breaths of the smoke, and my visitor commenced a story. It was a weird, strange tale, and he narrated it in his low, sweet voice, rhythmically and almost chant-like. I listened to the tale, and unconsciously I smoked on, and with every inhalation of the smoke a peculiar feeling of exaltation crept over my senses—insidiously and gradually. The dimly-lit room and the objects in it grew strangely ethereal-looking, and a bluish haze grew over everything, till all around me, and the figure before me, and even the sound of his voice, seemed to be part of a peaceful and delightful dream. Yes, delightful, for although my volition had passed from me, and I felt incapable of word or movement, I seemed to be under a thrall of some beneficent influence.

“Before me the dervish sat, and I heard his voice clearly, but as in the distance. And I watched the movements of his mouth as he spoke. But oh, those piercing eyes of his! How bright they grew! Their expression seemed to change and be-

come more intense with every movement; and there were times when I was struck, in the midst of my half-trance, by a horrible and indefinable fear of those eyes; but the fear passed like a flash of thought, and left me in my enchanted happiness again. And I smoked on without the wish or the power to relinquish that accursed pipe.

“And then—I remember everything distinctly, though I felt powerless at the time to move or think for myself—those eyes fascinated my very being, and I stared at them helplessly. And the voice went on, but it changed. It no longer told me Oriental tales, but it spoke of travels, not alone in the East, but in the West. It told of Californian gold mines and Mexican silver mines; it told me of things that were familiar to me, of scenes in an English land, of a love won and lost, and of a vow of vengeance; and, gentlemen, the strange dervish was speaking to me in English! But I listened as a child listens to the voice of its mother who is soothing it to sleep.

“But still I watched the piercing dark eyes, and, as I watched, one clear, strong inspiration seemed to sweep over my soul, for an instant almost loosening it from its trance. I had seen those eyes before in the dim past!

“And then the eyes came slowly towards me, till they stopped in front of my face. I was conscious of seeing the eyes only, and they seemed

to pierce my soul. And from the eyes, it seemed to me, a voice came—

“‘You who stole my life’s happiness, and made me a desperate wanderer among an alien people, now pay the only penalty I can inflict at the eleventh hour!’ And the voice died away in a mocking ‘Mizpah’!”

The old man stopped, and we waited with strained interest for the last of the story. Some of the party had stood up, but they also waited for the end.

“Late the next morning I awoke, and found myself stretched on a couch. An attendant of the hotel sat in an arm-chair by the window. I felt giddy and ill, and put my hand to my brow. Suddenly I remembered.

“‘My diamonds — O God! — my diamonds!’” I cried; and before the attendant could detain me, I had dashed from the couch, and reeled into the next room. The alarmed attendant followed me. I gave one glance, and that was sufficient. On the table where it had been there was no case of diamonds. It had gone.

“Yes, gentlemen, the diamonds had gone. The diamonds that had cost me £50,000 had vanished. And the man whom I had once unconsciously offended had indeed extracted his vengeance in this strange manner in the eleventh hour.”

Some one was commencing to ask a question,

when the old man made a gesture with his hand.

"No; I can tell you nothing more. No trace of the dervish of St. Sophia or the diamonds could ever be found, in spite of the most exhaustive search. And I know in my heart, gentlemen, that those diamonds will for years to come lie hidden merely as the ransom for my past happiness."

As the old man finished, a member of the club—a doctor known to us—entered, and went over to the old man. Then we all rose, and prepared to depart on our ways.

I was passing out through the doorway when Aylworth laid his hand on my arm and whispered—

"What about my theory of life?"

"I'm afraid you have a strong case," I returned.
"Good-night."

THE END.

Printed by Cowan & Co., Limited, Perth

WORKS BY
J. J. MORAN.

WEEKLY SUN : "The Barrie of Ireland."

STAR : "He has the distinction of being one of the most interesting writers of Irish dialogue."

LIVERPOOL MERCURY : "He is at his best as an Irish humorist."

"IRISH STEW."

Crown 8vo., Lithograph Covers, One Shilling.

EVENING SUN : "'Irish Stew' is a **GOOD LITERARY DISH.**"

FREEMAN'S JOURNAL : "Told with the author's well-known humor and skill in characterization, the reader is carried along through pages of drollery and extravaganza of a delightful kind, and is only dissatisfied when there is no 'stew' left."

"THE DUNFERRY RISIN'."

A Tale of the I.R.B. (Sixth Thousand.)

Crown 8vo., One Shilling.

LITERARY WORLD : "Frequent whiffs of light Celtic drollery are wafted through its pages. . . . A brightly-written story."

WHITKILL REVIEW : "There is an odd flash of fun in the book, and that counts for something in those days. The denouement is all that could be desired."

WESTERN MERCURY : "No graphic pen ever placed the charm of rustic Irish life in so charming a story."

A DEFORMED IDOL.

New Edition, Cloth, 3s 6d.

Mr. JUSTIN MCCARTHY wrote : "The plot of 'A Deformed Idol' is strong, original, and splendidly worked out."

The ATHENÆUM says : "A Deformed Idol' is a masterpiece in its way."

The LIVERPOOL MERCURY says : "A very pretty love story."

MORAN & Co., Aberdeen, and all booksellers.

Any of above books post free on receipt of published price.

MORAN'S SIXPENNY LIBRARY.

Handsomely bound in tinted wrappers, printed on toned paper, containing stories by the most charming writers of the day.

The following volumes of the **SIXPENNY LIBRARY** have already been published :—

Nellie's Lover, and other Stories.

By **MAGDALEN ROCK.**

The **NEWSAGENT AND BOOKSELLER'S REVIEW** says : "There are eight pleasant little novelettes in the book—surely excellent value."

The **PUBLISHER'S CIRCULAR** says : "The eight stories will form entertaining holiday reading."

The **DUNDEE ADVERTISER** says : "Bright tales of wholesome interest for either old or young. The title story is a charming example of what we may describe as lovemaking literature, while the other stories are fresh and attractive."

—o—

A STATE OF LIFE.

By **Mrs. PLUNKETT-KENNEY.**

The **WEEKLY SUN** says : "Mrs. Plunkett-Kenney has planned a simple yet ambitious series of stories. Taking a number of girls leaving a convent school, with all the strange and mystical, and too often disappointing futures before them, she has undertaken to tell of their fortunes and vicissitudes—or to allow them to do so in diaries which they promise to keep faithfully for reproduction long afterwards. . . . Stella O'Neil's pretty love story holds the attention of the readers to the end."

The **CATHOLIC TIMES** says : "A story which is likely to create a wide-spread interest."

—o—

Above two books can also be had in boards with cloth back, at One Shilling each. In this form they are more suitable for private or lending libraries.

MORAN'S SIXPENNY LIBRARY

(Continued.)

HAZELMOUNT.

By ELIZABETH KING.

The publication of this story possesses a melancholy interest. The gifted authoress, who had through her previous writings raised up hosts of friends and admirers, considered "HAZELMOUNT" her best work, and entered with zeal into all the arrangements for its publication in the present form. When the first proofs were sent her for correction and revision, they were returned by a relative with the sad news that the authoress was dead. She did not live to see the proofs, and the revision was carried out by other hands.

—o—

STRATHMORE HALL.

By MARGUERITA.

The NEW IRELAND REVIEW says: "This story the conflict of natural affection with religious faith, a noble triumph of devotion to the higher principle. From point of view the story is in every way commendable."

—o—

OTHER SIXPENNY VOLUMES TO FOLLOW.

—o—

Order any of above books from your nearest bookseller, or send 6 stamps for specimen copy to the publishers,

MORAN & Co., Aberdeen.

Digitized by Google

Just Published.

A BRAESIDE LASSIE ;

By Mrs. GUTHRIE, author of "Five o' Diamonds,"
"West of the Shannon," &c.

Crown 8vo., cloth tinted, 1s 6d ; fancy illustrated wrapper,
One Shilling.

PRESS OPINIONS :

The LITERARY WORLD (Aug. 20th, 1896) : "A BRAESIDE LASSIE is an excellent little story, whose excellence is in some danger of being overlooked on account of the quiet simplicity of the plot and its development. An old Scotch maiden lady and her two nieces, a stern and somewhat Puritanical suitor to one of the latter, a missing bag of money, much misunderstanding and bitterness, and a tardy repentance—these are all the materials which Mrs. Guthrie has employed, but of these we must add a quick sense of humour and a gift of characterization to account for the success she has achieved. . . . We should suggest it as a companionable little volume against those days when the hours are apt to drag."

The NOTTINGHAM DAILY GUARDIAN : "In her delineation of Scotch character, Mrs. Guthrie has been singularly successful. The heroine is not the commonplace beauty of modern fiction. She is an unassuming and retiring girl, who could not if she would break through the decorum of a well-disciplined life. . . . The cross-grained aunt is a well-drawn character, a mere crab-apple of humanity, a study in old-age whims and crochets. The plot, thoroughly interesting, is at no time sensational, though here and there excitement runs very high."

Of all booksellers, or direct on receipt of published price
from the publishers,

MORAN & Co., Aberdeen. Digitized by Google

MORAN'S † CHEAP † FICTION.

From the pens of Popular Catholic Novelists.

Published at 3d. each.

- 1.—THE MYSTERY OF GEOFFREY MELCOMBE'S DEATH. By Magdalen Rock.
- 2.—A LIFE BETWEEN. By Mary Cross.
- 3.—A DAY OF RECKONING. By Monica Tregarthen, Author of "Her Angel Friend," &c.
- 4.—REGINA. By A. Goldwin, Author of "In Due Season," &c.
- 5.—A COCKNEY COLLEEN. By J. J. Moran.

Published at 6d. each.

- 1.—NELLIE'S LOVER, and Other Stories. By Magdalen Rock.
- 2.—HAZELMOUNT. By Elizabeth King.
- 3.—A STATE OF LIFE. By Mrs. Plunkett-Kenney.
- 4.—STRATHMORE HALL. By Marguerita.

Published at 1s. each.

- 1.—THE DUNFERRY RISIN'. A Tale of the I. R. B.
- 2.—A STATE OF LIFE. The story of an Anglican Conversion. By Mrs. Plunkett-Kenny.
- 3.—NELLIE'S LOVER, AND OTHER STORIES. By Magdalen Rock.
- 4.—"IRISH STEW." By J. J. Moran.
- 5.—THE TENANTS OF THE GREY HOUSE. By M. Nethercott.
- 6.—STRATHMORE HALL. By Marguerita.
- 7.—LUTTRELL'S DOOM. By D. F. Hannigan.
- 8.—STORIES FOR YOUNG CATHOLICS. By Ellie Lawlor
(*Handsomely Bound in Cloth*).
- 9.—A BRAKESIDE LASSIE. By Mrs. Guthrie.
- 10.—HER VOCATION. By M. J. Wallis.
(*Handsomely Bound in Cloth*)

Any of the above sent free by post on receipt of published price, by

MORAN & Co., Publishers, Aberdeen.

